A DISCOVRSE of the SINNE against the Holy Ghost.

Grounded upon Matt. Chap. 12. verſ. 22.—23.

Tending to the comfort of ſuch Perſons as, being afflicted in conſcience for their ſins, are, by the deluſions of Satan, brought to the brinke of Deſpaire, through feare that they have fallen into that unpardonable Sinne.

Written ſome ſpace of time ſince, by that godly and judicious Divine M. *William Bradſhaw*, ſometime Fellow of *Sydny* Colledge in *Cambridge*; and publiſh'd by his ſonne *Iohn Bradſhaw*.

1 Theſ. 5. 21. *Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.*

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The Preface to the Reader.

AS the Portall is to the house in Architecture, so should the Preface to a Treatise be answerable and sutable. The Discourse, here set forth, is neither large, nor yet quaint, or floscularry, no more is this Introduction. And indeed when should plainnesse of speech, and expression be used, but then when darke things are to be made plaine? The end of Rhetoricke is to cloath; of Logicke, to make bare or naked;

therefore in matters of difficulty, we are to make use of the latter, and lay by the former. The best Rhetoricke in discourses polemicall is to use expression most lively and naturally setting forth our notion, with a cleare kind of brevity. Not so long as to tyre, nor so short as to unsettle the Reader; neither to starve his expectation with brevity, nor to surfet it with a confused prolixity.

Hor. l. 1. Ser. Sat. 1. est modus in rebus, &c. Senec. Oedip. Act. 4. fata si licuat mihi fingere arbitrio meo, temperem ego tyro levi vela &c.

The ancient Schoolemen in avoiding of Elegancy in disputes have observed the rule aforesaid thorowly, and a little too much, for they have runne away so farre from unseasonable elegancy, that in many words they have fallen into flat Barbarisme. And I beleeve (reserving all due praise and respect to their cleare and strong abilities joyned with indefatigable study) that if the Latin and Greeke tongues had

been

been better knowne to some of them, they might there have found variety of fit words by which to expresse their notions, without adding to the Latin a Dialect of their owne. It is pitty, I confesse, any notion, especially in divine things should be lost for want of an expression, and yet withall it's pitty to shape words of our owne, when languages may affoord them. For it is an undoubted rule in humanity, that seeing things * are made known by words, the words themselves ought to be well knowne; which they cannot be, if they be out of use, and they must needs be out of use, if they be new coyned.

I desire also to be short and succinct as this Treatise is, and I could wish it were more in use then it is in things published: when the world had nothing but

* Nam cum omnis ex e & verbis constet ratio neq; verba sedem habere possint, si rem subtraxeris, atque res lumen, si verba. Cicle orator. lib. 3.

a few manuscripts, Bookes were scarce; & thē the more large writings were, the more they were acceptable. But since, by that happy Art of Printing, Bookes have so multiplyed, swarming continually out of the Presse, tanquam ex equo Trojano, concisenesse is more approveable, which men might better effect, if they would with judgement cull out the choyceft of their readings and other their labours, and so tender them to the world.

In this subject of the sinne against the Holy Ghost, there are foure maine difficulties, in which satisfaction is desired.

1 What kinde of sinne this is, and how it differs from other sinnes. Now because the difference is grounded much upon the unpardonablenesse of it;

2 The second difficulty is, how

how this sin is unpardonable, and in what sense. And because the unpardonablenesse seemes grounded on, 1 Iohn 5.16. Heb.6.4, 5,6. & Heb.10.26—29.

3 *The third is whether this sinne in* Matth.12. Mark. 3. *and* Luke 12. *be of the same nature with those in* 1 Iohn 5. Hebr. 6. *and* Hebrewes 10. *Moreover, because those places speake not directly, or expresly of any sinne against the Holy Ghost.*

4 *The fourth inquiry shall be, why, and in what sense it is called the Sinne against the Holy Ghost. Of these foure, as briefly and clearely as God shall enable me, and that without any coincidence with, or contradiction of what is contained in the ensuing Treatise.*

What kinde of sinne this is, and how it differs from other

Pet. Lomb. lib. 2. di stinct. 43. Aquinas 2. 2. qu. 14. artic. 2. Antonin. sum part. 2. Tit. 8. cap. 8. and others.

great sinnes, that seeme like to it or the same with it. The Schoolmen have made sixe species or kindes of it: first, desperation, secondly, presumption, thirdly, impenitency, fourthly, obstinacy, fifthly, Veritatis agnitæ impugnatio, *fighting against a truth that wee acknowledge*, sixtly, *envie at our brothers graces and sanctification*. Which as it appeares are all or most grounded upon severall places in Saint Augustine. If therefore they meane that these are, or may be consequences and properties of that sinne, we yeeld to them, but not that they are kindes of that sinne.

1 For desperation, a man may despaire, and yet not commit this sinne, although he that commits this sinne must needes despaire, if before death his conscience be awaked.

Many

Many have despaired for a time, and after beleeved, and so obtained pardon. Yea, a man may possibly despaire finally, and yet not sinne this sinne: because despaire doth not necessarily imply any scorne, hatred, or malice, against the mercy and favour of God, which is the maine in the sinne against the Holy Ghost. Therefore despaire in this life, is so farre from being a kinde of this sinne, as indeed it is but a separable adjunct of it.

2. *For presumption; they thus describe it: it is that whereby a man, that he may commit sinne, refuses the thoughts of Gods Iustice in punishing sinne, and strives to smother, and stifle any such thoughts. This indeed is an evill very dangerous to the soule, but yet not that great Sin against the Holy Ghost, which thus I prove: It may be forgiven,* Antonin. sum. part. 2. Tit. 8. cap. 8. vt supra.

ven; *therefore it is not that sinne: it may be repented of, therefore it may be forgiven; it shall be repented of, therefore it may be repented of:* Deut. 17. 13. *And all the people shall hear and feare, and doe no more presumptuously, that is, shall repent of their former presumptions. The Hebrew word is* יזידון Iezidun, *which properly signifies, to waxe hot, and boyle over, and by a Metaphor, to swell against another; and here, to stop the eares proudly and stubbornely against the sentence of the Priest whose sentence was Gods: Even this may be repented of, as those words shew, they shall heare and feare, and by the words* לא עוד lo gnod, *not againe; Presumption may be the way to it, but is not the same with it.*

3 *Concerning impenitency, either it must be for small impenitency,*

nitency, or that which is finall also; if formall impenitency, as it is such, then all impenitency is irremissible, for a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia; and then who could be saved? if finall impenitency, it is granted indeed, that is a property of him that sinnes that great sinne, but yet it is proprium imperfectum, because it doth agree, omni & semper peccanti in Spiritum Sanctum, but not soli.

4 Concerning Obstinacy, it is all one with hardnesse of heart, and is a cause of impenitency, and is a property; as is aforesaid: of that great evill, but not that sinne, and so I conceive, * Augustine is to bee understood.

5 The resisting of a truth knowne and acknowledged by the person resisting, may easily lead

* Epist. 50. circa finem — hoc est autem duritia cordis usque ad finem hujus vitæ; quod homo recusat in unitate corporis Christi, quod vivificat Spiritus Sanctus, remissionem accipere peccatorum.

lead him to this sinne, but is not the same. For Peter *in denying Christ, resisted a truth acknowledged, yet was not guilty with these Pharisees.*

6 *To envy at the Graces of another, to fret that the Gospel is preached, that beleevers increase, that souls are converted when mens spirits boyle up against Gods Ordinances, and the good successe of them in the world, it is a neare degree to this fearefull sinne, but not necessarily that sith all this may be out of ignorance, as in Saint* Paul *before his conversion, or out of other aymes, and not out of any rancour or despight to the grace it selfe.*

To the consideration of these six vices how farre they differ from that sin aforesaid, I thinke it not amisse to adde somewhat that I meet with in a German† Writer:*

Act. 26. 11 exceeding mad against them.

* *Raphael Eglino de peccato in Sp. S. Removetur primum ab hoc peccati genere quicquid legi contrarium proprie & per se est, cujusmodi est primor. parent. originale, &c. Thesibus 21 22, 23, 24.*

† First, (saves he) we must remove and exempt from this sin what soever is properly and in it selfe contrary to the law, as the originall sinne of our first parents, and

The

The second Difficulty.

For the not pardoning it must be understood in one of these three senses.

1 *That though happily it may be, yet it never was, nor shall be pardoned in event. Those that so understand it, give this reason. Our Saviour (say they) sayes not, it is impardonable, but shall not be pardoned: Those that goe to hell for other sinnes, their sinnes were unpardoned, but not unpardonable. So that their meaning is, that there shall never be any instance, example, or experience of any in whom this foule act is pardoned. But to this I answer, that this very thing, that there never shall be any instance or example, makes it unpossible, in some sense, to be forgiven. For* frustra est potentia

of our selves, also all actual sins of omission and commission against the first and second Table, so that they be not joyned with this. And after shewes that there is a broad difference between the sins committed against the Law directly, and against the Spirit of Grace, and the distinction is clearely laid down in the 10 of the Hebrewes 28. 29 The said Writer addes moreover, that sinne committed against Christ the Son of man, either of ignorance as in *Paul*, or out of sudden fear, as in *Peter*, cannot be said to be this sin.

tentia quæ nunquam producitur in actum. *It is a vain possibility that is never brought to effect: and a vaine possibility is as good as no possibility, and therefore no better then an impossibility. Besides, Saint* Iohn, 1 ep. cap. 5. v. 16. *sayes it shall not be prayed for; which yet it might, if there were any possibility of forgivenesse; and* Heb. 6. 4. *sayes it is impossible to renew them againe to repentance, speaking of the same sinne, or one not so bad.*

2 Sense. *The second Sense that some give, is, that our Saviour means it may be pardon'd, but with a great deale of difficulty. But this may not passe for sound. There are two amongst the Romanists, men of great judgement (setting aside their affections and voluntary engagements to their own cause.)* Iansenius *and*

Iansenius in conc. Evang. c. 49

Estius,

Estius, *who, as in many other things, here jumpe together in this interpretation. The ground they build on, they thus levell: In that sense (say they) that our Saviour sayes that all other sins, except this, shall be forgiven, in the same sense he sayes that this shall not be forgiven; but hee meanes not that all those sinnes are forgiven to every one, therefore he meanes not that this sin is not forgiven to every one. Consequently (say they) hee must needes speake of facility of pardon in the former, and of difficulty in the latter. But (under correction) I thinke any indifferent man may see our Saviour speakes of possibility and impossibility. For, sayes Christ, all manner or kinde of sinne and blasphemy, else shall be forgiven to men: not every particular sinne to every particular man;* for

Estius in. sentent l 2. distinct. 43. §. 3.

for then who shall be damned? But all sinnes in some men or other, and by consequence, this kinde of sinne in no man. As if I should say all diseases in men shall be cured, but the Pestilence taking the vitals shall not be cured, it is manifest I speake of possibilities and impossibilities; for else it were as much as to meane that some diseases are easie to be healed, which are not easie, as desperate Feavers, desperate consumptions and many others, which were a flat contradiction to the truth.

3. Sense. *Therefore I take the third interpretation to be most sound, that there is no possibility of forgivenesse: and that not in regard of Gods power absolute, who can doe what soever he will, but in regard of his absolute will, who will not have it done, and therefore it cannot be done. The im-*

possibility

possibility whereof seems grounded on 1 Iohn 5. Hebr. 6. 4. Hebr. 10. 26. *and so I proceed to the third Difficulty.*

The third Difficulty.

WHether this Sin, Matt. 12. Mark. 3. Luke 12 *be the same with* 1 Iohn 5. Hebr. 6. Hebr. 10. *That it coincides with* 1 Iohn 5. 16. *the current of Interpreters will tell you.* [a] Austin: *I thinke a brother then sinnes to death, when after acknowledgement of God by the grace of Christ, hee sets himselfe against the brethren, and burnes in envie against that very grace by which he was reconciled to God.* See Gualter. *Also* Perkins *his Dialogue on* 1 Iohn.

But to come to Argument: In that Saint Iohn *sayes it shall not*

1 Sam. 2. 25.

a Aug. lib. 1. de Ser. Domin. in monte. Peccatum fratris ad mortem puto, cum post agnitionem Dei per gratiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quisquam oppugnat fraternitatem & adversus ipsam gratiam qua reconciliatus est Deo, invidentiæ facibus agitatur. So Beda.

not be prayed for, it shewes it must needes be some extraordinary haynous crime. The Sinne of Simon Magus was very great, which made Peter say, he was in the gall of bitternesse, &c. Act. 8. 23. Yet the Apostle there wishes him to pray for forgivenesse: pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven.

The Sinne of them that stoned Stephen was great and fearefull, it was peccatum aggregatum, there was Envie, Pride, Murder, and persecution, all conjoyned, yet Stephen prayes for them. Therefore this sinne to death must exceed Pride, Malice, Envie, Persecution, and then what can it be lesse then the sinne against the Holy Ghost.

Concerning Hebr. 6. 4, 5, 6. who doubts but this sinne is also there understood.

Yet with these two differen-

ces

ces. *First, our Saviour, in the Evangelists, speakes most especially of sinne in speech that is blasphemie against the Holy Ghost, not excluding other kindes of Sinne; for, as he sayes all sinne and blasphemy shall be forgiven, that is, blasphemy, or any other sinne in thought or deed; so here againe, this blasphemy shall not be forgiven, nor any other sinne against the Holy Ghost, in thought or deed. It is sottish to thinke that this great sinne is onely confined to speeches, sith a man may be as bad or worse in deedes, as he can be in words. But here in the Hebrewes, the Apostle speakes more generally, as well of other sinnes against the Holy Ghost, as of blasphemy.*

Secondly, Musculus *shewes a second difference: Those (sayes he) that sinne against the Holy Ghost, are of two sorts. First, such*

Musc. comment. in Mat. 12. isti sunt duplicis generis, &c.

such as doe oppose and blaspeme that truth which they cannot but inwardly acknowledge, but have not at all given up their names to the profession of that Truth, so these Pharisees, here in the Evangelists.

Secondly, such as doe the like, but have also given up their names to it, and made profession of it, and of these this Epistle to the Hebrews chiefly makes mention.

But notwithstanding this difference, yet it is still the sinne against the Holy Ghost that is here spoken of: which thus I prove.

The Sinne against the Holy Ghost, is a malicious deniall of, & rage against a fundamentall, Evangelicall truth inwardly acknowledged, therefore it is contained in Hebr. 6. *For the fourth verse containes in it an inward*

Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.

inward acknowledgement of such a truth aforesaid, to which adde the fift verse: and for the malicious deny all of it, and rage and envy against it, it is clearely contained in verse 6. they fall away and crucifie, &c. that is they so fall away as to crucifie Christ, and doe what they can to cast all the disgrace and scorne they can upon Iesus Christ and the Christian Religion: Not that every falling away is a crucifying, for then had Peter *beene thus farre guilty; but* sensu diviso, *they so farre fall, as to commit this horrible indignity. Therefore I conclude, it is clearely spoken of in this sixt Chapter.*

And as clearely is it expresst in the tenth Chapter. The 26 verse containes in it this inward acknowledgement of such a truth above mentioned: after yee have received (saith he) the know-

knowledge of the Truth: The 29 verſe, containing a malicious rage againſt it. Who hath (ſayes the Apoſtle) troden under foot the Sonne of God, —— and done deſpight to the Spirit of Grace, not onely ſpoken, but done, not onely to Ieſus Chriſt, but to the Spirit of Grace, that is, the Holy Ghoſt, which leades us forward to the fourth and laſt Difficulty; Why, ſeeing it is againſt the whole Trinity (as all ſinnes are) and eſpecially againſt Ieſus Chriſt the maine of the Goſpel, it's called a Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt?

4. Difficulty.

Why it is called the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt? which admits of two ſenſes. For firſt, either Holy Ghoſt ſtands in oppoſition to man and uncleane ſpirits, to man, as it is a Spirit, to uncleane ſpirits; as it is the Spirit of holineſſe, the Holy Ghoſt; and ſo it

muſt

must signifie the Holy God. Or secondly, it is taken for the third Person in Trinity, in relative opposition to the first and second Persons, the Father and Son.

The ground of the first sense and interpretation lies thus: Our Saviour sayes that all blasphemy against the Sonne of man shall be forgiven, but not against the Holy Ghost; as if he had said, so farre forth as you sin against me, appearing but as a man, I will forgive you; but so farre forth as you sinne against me, appearing to be God as well as man, I will not forgive you. And whereas the word Holy is added to the word Ghost, or Spirit, that (say they) is in direct opposition to that unholy and uncleane spirit of Beelzebub, *to whose power these blasphemers did impute Christs great and gracious worke of casting*

out devils. * And certainely what greater blasphemy can be framed by the wit and invention of the most maligne wretch in the world, then to say that that is done by Beelzebub, which a mans conscience tels him is done by God? If nothing be so hatefull to God, and distant from God as sinne, and if nothing be so polluted with sinne as the Devill, and if amongst all the Devils, none so much as Beelzebub, the prince of Devils, what a monstrous, prodigious, transcendent blasphemy was this, to impute, and that wilfully, the worke of the most Holy pure God, to so foul and impure a spirit! a greater then which a mans thoughts cannot project. This sense cannot well stand, at least alone. For if God in opposition to man be

* Hieronymus ep. 149. ut cum videas in virtutibus, Beelzebub calumnieris in factis — & post ea — aliud est se Christianum negare aliud Christum diabolum dicere. Isidor. Pelus. epist. 39. Gorgoneo circ. finem. Ἡ δὲ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου βλασφημία διὰ τοῦτο ὑπέρχει ἀσύγγνωστος, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα φανέμενα ἀγνώμενας, καὶ ἀκαρίστους ἐλέγχει τοὺς βλασφημούντας· τῶν γὰρ παθῶν ἐκκοπτομένων καὶ τῶν δαιμόνων ἐλαυνομένων ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τῆς θεότητος ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβοὺλ τοῦτας γίνεσθαι τὰς θεισημένας ἐν γεγνῶσι ἰουδαῖοι συνεφάντασαν.

here

here understood by Holy Ghost, then all sinnes against the first Table are committed against the Holy Ghost.

The second Interpretation is, that it stands in opposition to the Father and the Sonne; and is taken properly for the third Person in Trinity. Of which the Schooles give this as the reason: because this foule sinne is properly against the goodnesse of God. For (say they) power is properly attributed to God the Father, wisedome to God the Sonne, goodnesse to God the Holy Ghost. Consequently, sinnes of infirmity are against God the Father, sinnes of Ignorance against God the Sonne, sinnes of malice and wickednesse, against God the Holy Ghost. Upon which notion of theirs, they inferre a reason why the sinne against the Ghost is onely

unpardonable, because sinnes of Infirmity and ignorance have some pretext, but the last hath none. In which positions of theirs, there is more subtilty, then sound verity. It's granted that Christ is called the Wisedome of God, but he is also called the power of God in the same place, 1 Corinth. 1. 24. *Yea, the Holy Ghost is called the power of God,* Luke 1. 35. *the power of the Almighty shall overshadow thee. Neither is it cleare, how the Holy Ghost is properly the goodnesse of the Godhead, sith the goodnesse of God is manifest to the world-ward, also in Christ the Sonne of God, taking our Nature, and laying down his life for us, out of whose fulnesse we all receive, and grace for grace.*

Secondly, were it so, that those attributes were proper to the three

three Persons, as is mentioned; and that in matter of expression towards the world, for so they understand it, acknowledging all the persons to bee in themselves equally powerfull, wise and good, I say, admit this to be true, yet how are sinnes of Infirmity against the power of God, or sins of Ignorance against the wisedome of God? What can we make of this? If sins of Infirmity be sins against the power of God, then it must either respect the Infirmity as Infirmity, or the sin as sin: if the Infirmity, as infirmity or weakenesse, it is no more against the power of God, then all naturall infirmities and weaknesses are in any creature whatsoever; but if sin as sin, then it is more properly against the Holinesse of God then his power.

Besides, when we say such a

ſin is againſt ſuch an attribute, we meane it doth eſpecially diſ honour that attribute, and take it in vaine; as deſperation is a ſin againſt the mercy of God, becauſe it diſhonours his mercy in limiting it; preſumption is a ſin againſt the juſtice of God, becauſe it is abuſed by it. But ſins of Infirmity doe not abuſe or leſſen the power of God, but rather illuſtrate it. But if they ſay that they meane a bare paſſive dead contrariety, ſuch as is between blacke and white, light and darkneſſe, or the like, then it is granted: but in the meane time they give us a very lame and uneven trichotomy of three ſorts of ſins. For they cannot deny but the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is more then a bare paſſive contrariety to the holineſſe and goodneſſe thereof, for it comprehends in it an active oppoſition, reſiſtance,

repug-

repugnancy, abuse, dishonour, despight against the Holy Ghost.

Therefore to conclude this fourth thing: It is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, because although it be equally a transgression against the whole Trinity, who as they are equall, so in every sin are equally offended; yet it seemes most to reflect upon the Holy Ghost, by which Christ, as man, did all his great workes, Matth. 12. 28. *If I by the Spirit of God cast out Devils, &c. by which to this day things are wrought that tend to the reparation and sanctification of man fallen; by which Christ is made ours, and we Christs, therefore it is called the Spirit of Grace, and despight is said to be done to the Spirit of Grace.*

Neither doth this thwart what is specified in the ensuing

Discourse, where it is said to have this name, because it is committed against the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost, for I grant that too; but as it is an offence, it is properly against a person. They sin indeed against those gifts and graces by repelling them, and making themselves for ever uncapable of the, but yet herein they offend properly the Spirit of God, by whom properly and immediately those graces are to be wrought in them.

Chrysost. in Mat. Spiritus autem sancti gratia multis, & magnis & parvulis signis se ipsam manifestaverat: nam prophetæ per spiritum omnia locuti sunt & omnes illi veteres multa de ipso acceperant documenta.

And though the Pharisees knew not distinctly whether there was an Holy Ghost or no, as a third person in Trinity proceeding from the Father and the Sonne, yet notwithstanding they could not but acknowledge a divine holy spirituall power proceeding from God, and closing with men, by which the Prophets formerly, and Christ now among st them,

them, did and spake so many holy and great things. See 1 Kin. 22.24.

Thus have I (good Reader) as briefly as well I could, laid open those foure things, which seeme hard in this matter, and that I hope without any intrenching upon the ensuing Treatise. My aime herein is, thy satisfaction; if I misse of it, it may be, it is either thy prejudicate thoughts, or slight perusall of what is written. But if thou hast duely weighed all things in the ballance of the Sanctuary, & found any thing too light, tell me of it, and I will either satisfie thee, if I can, or crave pardon of God and thee, if I cannot. However cover the failings of me thy brother from others, so long as they doe not endammage others, and Iesus Christ for ever cover thine. For my part I could doe

no lesse then I have done in publishing this small Worke following. I was told by a late friend, a little before his decease, that some Divines of his acquaintance, in the West of this Kingdome, had Copies of the same, as intending, if I had none, to publish theirs. I thought it therefore very convenient to precede them in that Worke. First, that none might be more forward to continue the memory of my deceased Father in any thing that might be usefull to the Church then I my selfe; and next to prevent other Copies, that happily written at the second and third hand or more might be much different from the originall. In inditing wherof I know the Authors ayme was at these things mainely. First, to comfort such afflicted mindes as thinke they have committed this sinne, but have

have not. Secondly, *To prevent all rash judgement of the persons of others, whom we are apt to judge guilty of this sin, but are not. Thirdly, to admonish men of it, and to teach them to avoyd the way that leades to it. Fourthly, to instruct all concerning the true guise and nature of it. What acceptance other Treatises of his, those especially of Iustification and preparation, have found in the world, is knowne to the world; this also may finde some, offence I know it can give none. The Author desires not thy prayers, who hath been dissolved, and beene with Christ now full twenty two yeares: those that he cannot enjoy, for his sake bestow on me, how short soever I fall of him, how unworthy soever I be of them.*

I have beene somewhat too large, and perhaps the Reader

a Quod non probatur ab aliquo esse commissum, nisi cum de corpore exierit. Aug. Epist. 50.

seeing the Treatise little, and the Preface long, will be ready to say as he, that seeing a little City and a great paire of Gates, said, the City perhaps will run out of the Gates. The Apophthegme is common. But to prevent such a thing, I will shut up the Gates, closing up all with my prayers, that this fearefull sinne may as seldome be committed (if it be Gods will) as it is pardoned. To which end, the Lord of his mercy give us all right understandings, humble hearts, tender consciences, the feare of his Name, the love of his truth, sincerity of faith, and truth of obedience; that our faylings may neither become fallings, nor our fallings irrecoverable; that if we sinne, we may repent; if we repent, wee may be forgiven; if we be forgiven, wee may be accepted, and if accepted, we may

for

for ever be glorified, through
IESVS CHRIST
our LORD.

Thine, an unworthy

April 1.
1640.

Minister of Iesus

Christ,

IOHN BRADSHAW.

Martii. 30
1640.

Imprimatur,
THO: WYKES.

MATH. CHAP. 12.

VERSE 22. *Then was brought to him one possessed with a Devill, blind and dumb; and he healed him, so that hee that was blind and dumb, both spake and saw.*

23. *And all the people were amased and said, Is not this the Sonne of David.*

24 *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said; This fellow doth not cast out the Devils, but through* Beelzebub *the Prince of Devils.*

25. *And Iesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them: Every Kingdome divided against it selfe, is brought to desolation; and every City or House divided against it selfe, shall not stand.*

26. *But if Satan cast out Satan, hee is divided against himselfe: how*

27. *And if I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom do your children cast them out? they therfore shall be your Iudges.*

28. *But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then is the Kingdome of God come unto you.*

29. *Or else how can one enter into a strong mans house, and spoile his goods, except hee first binde the strong man, and then spoile he may his house.*

30. *He that is not with me, is against me: and hee that gathereth not with me, scattereth.*

31. *Wherefore I say unto you,* * *Evesinne or Blasphemy shall bee forgiven unto men: but the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*

32. *And whosoever shall speake a word against the Sonne of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever shall speake against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.*

* Or, All manner of Sinne.

OF

OF THE SIN AGAINST THE *Holy-Ghost.*

MATH. CAP. 12. VER. 22, 23, 24.

THough there be no one thing wherein God hath decreed to glorifie himselfe more than in his mercy, in forgiving mans sinnes; and though the greater the sinnes are, the more his mercy shall shine in the pardoning and remitting of them; yet is there one kinde of sinne so hainous and horrible, so vile and abominable, that being once committed, it shall never be pardoned,

and Quality of that unpardonable Sinne.

The parts whereof wee will consider, not as they are in themselves, but as they have reference to that Sinne, that so by that meanes wee may the better cut off all matters that shall not tend to the illustration of it, though in themselves never so good and profitable.

There are therefore six things expressed in this History, concerning that particular Sinne that is here specified, which may give great light to all other of the same kinde.

1. The Conception of this Sin.
2. The Birth of it.
3. The Name of it.
4. The Nature of it.
5. The Conviction of it.
6. The Condition of it.

The first part. Of the Conception of this Sinne.

The Conception of it is by meanes of a wonderfull miracle that our Saviour Christ wrought upon one that was possessed bodily with an uncleane spirit. That divine beame

beame of light that ſtreamed from this miracle, ſhining upon their Conſciences, did animate and quicken this helliſh Monſter in the Scribes and Phariſees, as it appeares afterward. For it is with the light of Gods Spirit, as it is with the rayes of the Sunne, ſhining upon divers Objects, it produceth divers Effects; it bringeth forth through the variety of the ſoile; not the Roſe onely, but the Nettle; not the Fig-tree onely, but the Thiſtle; not the Vine onely, but the Brier: it animateth and quickneth not cleane alone; but uncleane Creatures alſo, as Toads, Adders, Hornets, and ſuch like. So the divine Truth of Ieſus ſhining upon divers perſons, it brings forth divers effects, and thoſe cleane contrary; in ſome by the bleſſing of God it produceth many excellent Graces; in other ſome, many foul and hideous Sinnes through the Corruption of the ſoile.

Hence may we draw theſe Concluſions concerning this Sinne.

Martii. 30
1640.

Imprimatur,
THO: WYKES.

MATH. CHAP. 12.

VERSE 22. *THen was brought to him one possessed with a Devill, blind and dumb; and he healed him, so that hee that was blind and dumb, both spake and saw.*

23. *And all the people were amazed and said, Is not this the Sonne of David.*

24 *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said; This fellow doth not cast out the Devils, but through* Beelzebub *the Prince of Devils.*

25. *And Iesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them: Every Kingdome divided against it selfe, is brought to desolation; and every City or House divided against it selfe, shall not stand.*

26. *But if Satan cast out Satan, hee is divided against himselfe: how*

27. *And if I by Beelzebub caſt out Devils, by whom do your children caſt them out? they therfore ſhall be your Iudges.*

28. *But if I caſt out Devils by the Spirit of God, then is the Kingdome of God come unto you.*

29. *Or elſe how can one enter into a ſtrong mans houſe, and ſpoile his goods, except hee firſt binde the ſtrong man, and then ſpoile he may his houſe.*

30. *He that is not with me, is againſt me: and hee that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth.*

31. *Wherefore I ſay unto you,* * *Evesinne or Blaſphemy ſhall bee forgiven unto men: but the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men.*

* Or, All manner of Sinne.

32. *And whoſoever ſhall ſpeake a word againſt the Sonne of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but whoſoever ſhall ſpeake againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.*

OF

OF THE SIN AGAINST THE *Holy-Ghost.*

MATH. CAP. 12. VER. 22, 23, 31.

THough there be no one thing wherein God hath decreed to glorifie himselfe more than in his mercy, in forgiving mans sinnes; and though the greater the sinnes are, the more his mercy shall shine in the pardoning and remitting of them; yet is there one kinde of sinne so hainous and horrible, so vile and abominable, that being once committed, it shall never be pardoned,

it being of that nature that it would staine the mercy of God in the pardoning and remitting of it: and this is the sinne that is called the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

The nature and quality of this Sinne is set forth in this part of the word, as also *Marke* 3.28. 1. *Iohn* 5. 16. *Hebr.* 6. 4,5,6. & 10.26,27,29. Of the Doctrine whereof a man may say, as the Philosopher said sometime of the Edition of his Physicks: The Nature of this Sinne is set downe in the word of God, and it is not set downe in the word of God. For it is so darkly set downe, that those that are not exercised in the word, cannot attaine to the understanding of it; and yet it is so set downe and laid forth in the same word, that those that count the Scripture worthy their study, may (if they will bestow the paines) come to the understanding of it.

In this History the Evangelist is

Ghost (whose publique Notary and Scribe he was) to register unto the Church one Example of the same; by which one may receive much light concerning the Quality and Nature of that Sinne.

In handling whereof, I will omit all other points, but those that may tend to the illustration of this Sinne; which I trust will not bee unprofitable unto any in this place: though I must confesse, in setting upon the same, I more respected my selfe than any of you, in that the want of the distinct knowledge thereof hath driven mee to bestow some meditations upon it. So much light therefore of it, as this portion of Scripture hath given unto mee, I am content to impart unto you: though, if you will have an exact and full knowledge of it, you must borrow further light from those other places of Scripture, that purposely also intreat of the same.

The Drift and Scope then of these verses is to shew us in a particular Example, what is the Nature

and Quality of that unpardonable Sinne.

The parts whereof wee will consider, not as they are in themselves, but as they have reference to that Sinne, that so by that meanes wee may the better cut off all matters that shall not tend to the illustration of it, though in themselves never so good and profitable.

There are therefore six things expressed in this History, concerning that particular Sinne that is here specified, which may give great light to all other of the same kinde.

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6. The Conclusion of it.

The first part. Of the Conception of this Sinne.

The Conception of it is by meanes of a wonderfull miracle that our Saviour Christ wrought upon one that was possessed bodily with an uncleane spirit. That divine beame

beame of light that ſtreamed from this miracle, ſhining upon their Conſciences, did animate and quicken this helliſh Monſter in the Scribes and Phariſees, as it appeares afterward. For it is with the light of Gods Spirit, as it is with the rayes of the Sunne, ſhining upon divers Objects, it produceth divers Effects; it bringeth forth through the variety of the ſoile; not the Roſe onely, but the Nettle; not the Fig-tree onely, but the Thiſtle; not the Vine onely, but the Brier: it animateth and quickneth not cleane alone; but uncleane Creatures alſo, as Toads, Adders, Hornets, and ſuch like. So the divine Truth of Ieſus ſhining upon divers perſons, it brings forth divers effects, and thoſe cleane contrary; in ſome by the bleſſing of God it produceth many excellent Graces; in other ſome, many foul and hideous Sinnes through the Corruption of the ſoile.

Hence may we draw theſe Concluſions concerning this Sinne.

The first Conclusion.

The Sin against the Holy Ghost is quickned as it were by the light and heate of some speciall divine Truth: for so is this particular Sin in this place. That light of the divine Truth shining about them, was it that first stirred and tempered their Corruption, and wrought and framed that monstrous Sinne, that had never been begotten, if it had never shined on them.

So that the very cause why this Sinne is committed, is by reason that such or such a divine Truth doth present it selfe to the Eye of their Conscience, which if it did not, they would not commit such a Sinne. For Example: These wicked Scribes and Pharisees, if neither this nor any such like means had been used, whereby they might have perceived this Truth, they had never committed this Sinne; but as it is apparent, they committed it because of that Truth.

The Vse whereof may be,

1 For information of our Iudgement

Iudgment concerning this Sin. We see many commit many strange and desperate Sinnes against the light of Gods Word, of Conscience, yea of Nature it selfe; and that also most wilfully, and stubbornly, & obstinately; yea, with this height of desperate resolution, that though they were sure they should goe to hell for it, yet they would doe it. Though such Sinnes be a fighting against the Truth, yet are they not this unpardonable Sinne, except the first and principall motion of it doe arise from that divine Truth, in such a manner, that he would not commit that Sinne, but for that divine Truths sake. For this is a Sin, the very first motions whereof, are conceived by the sight of a divine Truth; so that it is a Sinne not only committed in the light, and against the light; but by meanes of it, and even for the Truths sake.

2 Sith by reason of the Corruption of Mans minde, the divine Truth of God, the principall Organ or Instrument of all grace and

goodnesse in the Soul of Man, especially the Doctrine of the Gospell, may work and breed such monsters in the Soule; it behooves us to doe our uttermost endeavour to purge and sweep our Soule, as much as we can; especially when we are in such places, where these divine Truths shine and appeare most. For else, a thousand to one, but some Monster will arise in the Soule. Neither is there any divine Truth that presents it selfe to the eye of the Conscience, but doth breed some Monster or other in a corrupt Soule; though not so huge a one as this, yet that which may be a spawne, a fry, and seed to this. As therefore in the mud of Ægypt cast up by the overflowing of Nilus, are ingendred many vile and filthy creatures by the beames of the Sunne: so by the overflowing of Sinne, there being as strange mud cast over the Soule, strange Monsters will arise out of the same, by occasion of the divine light of Truth shining thereupon.

3 Hence observe the persons that

that are most capable of this Sinne; they are such as are most capable of divine Illumination, and most apprehensive of all Truth. A dullard, a blinde person that hath no eyes to looke above that which is humane, cannot commit this Sinne, but those that are able to see and behold the divine Truth. So that in this respect, Ignorance is an advantage to a man: For a narrow braine will not suffice to conceive this Sinne. The Scribes and Pharisees, *Iulian* the Apostata, and those that come neerest to this Sinne, the grand & Arch-persecutors of any divine Truth, they are men admirable for gifts. There are indeed many insolent Dunses and Sots that are malitious; but they receive this malice from the spirits of great wits; themselves are but axes and beetles in their hands. So that it is not a Mouse that can bring forth this Elephant; nor a Wren that can lay and hatch this Eagle.

4 Learn hence how to prevent this Sinne. Many there bee indeed that

that take a most vile course to prevent it; they will not know the divine Truth, because they will not wilfully resist it, and so desperately perish through their wilfull want of it. But let our course be for the preventing of it, to adore every divine Truth that we receive, and not to admit of the least thought against the same. Of all Sinnes this should be killed in the wombe. For other Sinnes may be cast out of possession and Kingdome, this never.

The second Conclusion.

The Sinne against the Holy Ghost is not conceived by means of every divine Truth, but of a supernaturall divine Truth, that is to say, an Evangelicall Truth. So that as every light is not a means to produce and quicken things, but the light of the Sunne onely: so every Truth is not a means to breed and animate this Sinne, but some Evangelicall Truth onely. The Truth hereof appeareth in this Example. That divine Truth that here stirred up this Sinne was this, that Christ Iesus

Iesus the Sonne of Mary was the true Messias. This it was that stirred up their minds to this Sinne. So that a naturall Truth cannot stirre up such a Sinne as this unpardonable one is; but as it is plaine Heb. 6. it must be a Truth concerning the Life to come.

1 Hence wee may observe the Climate of this Sinne, in what Region it is begotten, and hatched for the most part, if not altogether even in the Church of God: it is a Church Sinne. As therefore the greatest Sinner that ordinarily is in the World, even that man of Sinne sitteth in the Temple of God: so the the greatest Sinne that can bee committed by man, is committed in the Church, where onely or specially those beames doe shine, that stirre up this Sinne in the Soule of Man. For as the deadliest Serpents abound in the hottest countries: so the deadliest and desperatest Sinnes in those places, where the Gospell of God shineth forth in its greatest strength. *Vse.*

2 In Temptation the Childe of

of God may make use of this Conclusion. For let the Sinner that he is troubled in Conscience for, be never so hainous and desperate against Conscience; yet, if by the light of the Gospell they have not been stirred up unto it, it is not this unpardonable Sinne.

The third Conclusion.

This Sinne is not engendred and stirred up by every Evangelicall Doctrine and Truth, but by the maine and fundamentall Doctrines of the Gospell. For this was it that begat this Sinne in them, that this Christ whom they so horribly revile, is that Messias and Saviour of the World. This was it that made them spit out this blasphemy; because they saw he was so. Though therefore there is no Legall, nor Evangelicall Truth, but it hath this property through the Corruption of mans nature, to stirre up the minde to Sinne, yet no Truth, but a maine and Fundamentall Truth, the excellentest Truth, and that which being presented to the Soule of an elect

elect Childe of God, doth stirre up in him the most principall Graces of God, and begets in him an unspeakable Love of God: the same Truth it is that begets in the reprobate (if God leave them to harden themselves) the highest and most horrible Sinne. For that which is an Instrument of holinesse to the good, is an Instrument of impiety to the wicked: and so by degrees, that Illumination which is the meanes of the greatest Grace in Gods Children, is the meanes of the greatest Sinnes in the Reprobate. The Doctrine of the Law begetteth many Graces in the heart of Gods Childe; the Doctrine of the Gospell more. Every Evangelicall Truth is a meanes of much Grace; the Fundamentall and high points thereof much more: So on the contrary. It is therefore an high Evangelicall Truth, that is, the stirrer up of this high Diabolicall Sinne.

1 This should admonish us, if wee desire to keep our selves out of this bottomlesse gulph, to take heed how *Use.*

how we abuse the Gospell of Iesus Christ unto sinne against God, especially the highest Mysteries of it. It's a Corruption that weare too much subiect unto. It is a fearefull thing that our hearts should be stirred up to sinne the more by the Law, as it is; that Sinne should take occasion by the Commandement, to worke all kind of Concupiscence in us, that it should revive Sinne in us. But much more fearefull is it, when by the Gospell we shall thereunto be stirred up, yea by the principall parts of it.

Rom. 7. 8, 11. vers. 9.

2. This may be a relefe to a distressed Conscience that shall bee tempted and perswaded by Satan that he hath committed this Sinne. Satan setteth before thine eyes, to the end that thou mightst despaire of mercy, and so grow profane, and an enemy to God, some fearefull Sinne that thou hast committed, and he telleth thee its the Sinne against the Holy Ghost. This should make thee to try and examine what moved and stirred thee principally to that Sinne.

Sinne. And if it shall appeare to the Eye of thy Conscience, that the light of the Gospell, and the chiefe Ordinances thereof, did not irritate or provoke thee thereunto; that Sin of thine cannot be this Sin against the Holy Ghost. For he that commits this, must be an enemy to the Gospell of Iesus Christ. And as the presence of those whom a man doth hate, useth to stir up in a man blasphemous and outragious speeches of him, by making his stomack and choler to rise against him: so the like effects doth the presence of Christ in the ordinances of the Gospell, produce in those that be enemies and haters of him.

3 Hence wee may have some light, why this Sinne is unpardonable, because it is a Sinne stirred up and provoked directly by the pardon. For what is the maine matter and principall Doctrine of the Gospell, but an offer of pardon of Sinne to all those that will receive Iesus Christ. And why should they bee vouchsafed pardon, that doe not

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onely contemne the same, but so hate it, that they are by the offer thereof worse than before. The Kingdome of God was come to these hellish Imps. God brought Iesus the Messias unto them. Their owne Consciences acknowledged it: the light of Gods Spirit sealed and confirmed it. What was all this but an offer of pardon? which they despise so farre forth, that they are for the very offer of it the worse.

The fourth Conclusion.

It is not the light of the Gospell in generall, and in a confused manner shining, or set forth in types, and shadowes, and figures that did beget this blasphemy; but some speciall and particular beam of Light being palpably and evidently presented to the Eye of their Consciences. Its an experimentall knowledge that begat in them this Sinne. The Doctrine of the Messias they knew well enough, and approved it: as also they affected with great devotion those Mysticall Rites and Ceremonies of the Iewish Gospell, that shadowed

dowed out the same: this only was it which they could not endure, the direct light and truth of it in particular, presenting it selfe to the Eye of their Conscience. For example: In Tapestry and Imagery wee can with delight behold the portraiture of Serpents, Toads, Foxes, Wolves, and other filthy Beasts, that we cannot, when themselves in themselves shall be presented unto us, but fly from them, or pursue them to death. Even so is it with many professors of Christ, that though they seeme much affected to Christ in generall, and much devoted to every shadow and semblance of him; yet doe they notwithstanding indeed hate and malice him, and would, were he present in person with them, pursue him even unto death.

Vse. 1. Not to measure Religion by a generall profession, and an outward conformity unto the Rites and Ceremonies thereof. For even the most malitious and spightfull enemies that Christ hath, are such as professe

professe Christ, yea, and persecute Christ in the name of Christ.

2 If in the houre of Temptation thou canst in thy Conscience assure thy selfe that thou wast never thus affected, when the Gospell and Christ Iesus was presented unto thee, that thy minde did never rise nor lift up it selfe against it, but ever liked and loved it; yea if thy Conscience tell thee that thou art so farre from this affection, that the more knowledge thou hast had of Christ, the more thou lovest him; thou mayst assure thy selfe that this Sinne is not so much as breeding in thee.

The

The second part.

The Birth of this Sinne.

YOu have heard before how this Blasphemy was conceived by the beames of a Divine Truth that shined to the Eye of their Conscience, whereby these Scribes and Pharisees discerned indeed that Christ was the Sonne of God. This first quickned this Monster, and made it to swell and grow in the wombe of their hearts. Now wee are to consider the Birth of this Sinne, by what means it was brought forth of them.

This is set downe *verse* 23. For when the Scribes and Pharisees did not only see the wonderfull works that our Saviour Christ wrought,

came thereby to the light of that Truth, which they laboured to the uttermost to smother and extinguish: as soone as ever they began to descry, that that the people were astonished at the wonderfull workes of Christ; and that in this their astonishment they began to conclude, that he was surely the Christ: they could not then containe any longer, but presently breathe out this fearfull Blasphemy. So that the sight of the peoples astonishment, and the hearing of their words, wherby they began to give glory to Christ, as the Messias and Saviour of the World, was the Mid-Wife that brough forth this Sinne.

Whence observe we these Conclusions concerning this Sinne.

The first Conclusion.

The cause that irritateth and provoketh men unto this Blasphemy, is not within themselves, but out of themselves. The matter of this Sinne was within themselves; but the irritating cause was out of themselves. For if this divine Light had shined

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never so beightly upon their owne Soules, howsoever they might have maliced the same, yet they would never in that manner have spit out Blasphemies into the eares of men against it. For they knew well enough that it was not so as they said; and therefore had it not been more in regard of others than themselves, they would never have said so. And thus it is in the extreme malitious speeches of many concerning man: men are wont by seeing other mens respect unto him, to be provoked and stirred up thereto.

Vse. This may serve to informe men truly in another point concerning this Sin; to wit, that those thoughts and words that are suddenly begotten and hatched in man, himselfe knoweth not how nor which way, cannot be properly said to bee this Sinne. For that which stirreth up a man to commit this Sinne, is an Externall cause out of himselfe. Many have many times strange blasphemous thoughts and fantasies; yea, they many times breake forth into words,

words concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning the Scripture, &c. But for their heart-bloud, they cannot tell either how they come, or how they were moved unto them. Now, howsoever we have just cause to humble our selves for such Sinnes as rise out of our minds thus we know not how, yet have we no just cause therfore in regard of them to condemne our selves as guilty of this horrible Sinne.

The second Conclusion.

Those that commit this Sinne, in the committing of it have a respect to others. For others sakes doing that they doe, and are in that regard stirred up unto it. As in this Example, the Scribes and Pharisees in blaspheming Christ, had a respect to the people, and in this regard were they stirred up indeed, so to blaspheme. For their intent was to make Christ odious and vile in the eyes of them that began to admire & adore him. And this among men

them, not to themselves onely, but to others. This Sinne therefore is such a malice and despight, as is in a man stirred up by others.

Use. The dearest Saints and Servants of God having in them many remainders of corruption, the Lord many times leaving them to themselves, suffereth Satan to buffet them, as hee did *Paul*, to the end they might bee humbled, and not puffed up with the graces of God in them. For we carry about with us a strange nature, that will make us proud that wee are not proud, and that is the most dangerous pride of all. And therefore when God hath given a Christian grace to go before others in many holy exercises, to make more conscience of the Word, Sabbath, Sacraments, and Prayer, than others ordinarily doe, and vouchsafed in more than ordinary manner to reveale himselfe unto him; hee leaveth commonly a sting in the flesh to humble them, he suffereth such sometime to fall into many strange Sinnes; yea, such as 2 Cor. 12. 7.

may have some resemblance unto the highest and extreamest Sinne against the Holy Ghost. But the Children of God, in such spirituall desertions, are to take heed how they boult out of their hearts all hope of mercy. For although the Sinne they have committed may have a shew of malice and hatred to God and his Truth, which is in every man in some degree so farre forth as he is flesh; yet so long as it is not a malice and despight thus regarding others, but certaine flashings onely, it cannot bee this Sinne.

The third Conclusion.

This Sinne is no Closet-Sinne, nor Chamber-Sinne, or House-Sin, but a publique Sinne, a professed malice and hatred against Christ and his Truth; a Sinne proclaimed with the sound of Trumpet, committed in the market place.

That Blasphemy therefore that is ashamed to shew the head, that blusheth

blusheth to looke a Christian in the face, is not this Sinne. This is an impudent and a shamelesse Sinne.

The fourth Conclusion.

The very end of this Sinne is a malitious purpose and resolution to extinguish the divine truth and love of Christ in others; and therefore it desireth to imprint that malice upon others, as these here doe; yea this is the very reason why it is committed.

The fifth Conclusion.

This Sinne is a Sinne of Opposition and Contradiction, when men malitiously and spightfully oppose themselves unto, and contradict the Truth of God professed by others, and that to the face of the professors of it; yea, and therfore, because it is professed by others.

The sixth Conclusion.

They that commit this Sinne, of

all other things can least endure the contrary practise and profession in others; but according to the degrees thereof are the degrees of this Sin, and by that very practise and profession of others are men thrust as it were into it.

A man through the malice of Satan may have many strange and blasphemous thoughts running in his mind; yea, sometime breaking forth even in tongue against God, against Christ, against the Word of God, against this or that Article of Religion; yet so long as man can with any patience endure to heare the contrary professed, and to see the contrary practised, and is not thereby provoked and stirred up the more to that Sin, and to the hatred of those persons that professe or practise the contrary, so long is hee farre from this Sinne. For this is a Sinne that breaketh forth by the contrary profession and practise. They therefore that are so far from being stirred up by the contrary practise and profession of others,

that

that they love the contrary practise and profession in others, are very far from this Sinne.

The seventh Conclusion.

This Sinne is a Sinne that will endure no reasoning, no disputing, no conference, no contradiction, no perswasion, no authority, and by consequent, no remedy.

They therefore that hold and maintaine, though affectedly, any blasphemous Errours, and yet can patiently endure contradiction and opposition, or disputation and conference; yea, that delight therein, and affect it, and take it in good part, especially if thereby they bee mitigated and allaied, are farre also from this Sinne.

The eighth Conclusion.

This Sinne is a Sinne committed in knowledge, in advisement, in deliberation, in judgement, and not only in violence of rage & passion.

Men commit it not in their hot bloud, incensed by some personall disgrace, nor in any distracted fury or temporary madnesse; but they do it advisedly, deliberately, wittingly, freely. Thus was it here with these. There was nothing at all in the voice of the multitude that might provoke them to wrath. If the people had taken occasion hereby to cry out upon the Scribes and Pharisees, that gave Christ no better entertainment: if they had denounced curses and woes against them, as Christ himselfe sometime did, and by this means had first inraged them, and they then in their rage and fury against them had broken out into these blasphemies against Christ, it had changed the nature of their Sinne. For a man in his fury and rage, provoked by another, may sometime speake very spightfull words against them whom he beareth no malice unto in his heart; especially in his cold bloud. So that this was no sudden, rash, heady, unadvised, distempered Sinne; but

but a deliberate, staied, setled, firme Sinne.

The ninth Conclusion.

This Sinne against the Holy Ghost is not a secondary malice, arising orginally from the hatred of some other; but it is a direct and immediate malice against Christ and the Gospell. They did not thus spightfully speake against Christ, because they maliced these people that began to love Christ; but because they maliced Christ, therefore they spake thus malitiously of him to the people, whom they had no cause to malice but for Christs sake. This is not therefore a refracted, or a reflected malice. For what was there in these Iewes, or in their speech, that should make them in this manner to breake forth into blasphemy?

The tenth Conclusion.

Every Blasphemy is said in the

word to be a kinde of piercing of God: For that is one Hebrew name that is given unto it. So that this Blasphemy is as it were a kinde of discharge of a great Cannon-shot against the Lord. Now what is the Match that giveth fire to this Cannon? you may see it here; the zealous profession of others. So that as the Light of the Gospell turned their thoughts as it were into a pouder; so the same light affecting others, is as it were a match to set these their thoughts all on fire.

op: Lev. 24. 11, 26. See Iux. notes.

And hence it may appeare, that even the Children of God, albeit they be so upheld, that they commit not this Sinne; yet may feele in themselves a great inclination unto it, insomuch as nought but the hand of God keepeth them from it. For how doe our mindes naturally rise and swell at those that wee see more forward in Religion than our selves? but in other matters if we see men go further than our selves, we cannot endure it.

The

The third part.

Of the Name of this Sinne.

Hitherto of the Conception and Birth of this Sin. We are now to intreat of the kinde and quality of it, which wee are to gather partly out of the answer that the Scribes and Pharisees make to this people, and partly out of the Titles that Christ himselfe gives unto it.

Where first of the Name, and then of the Nature.

You have here then this Monster brought forth; you have it named: it is said to be a Sinne of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Where, by Sinne against the Holy Ghost, you must not understand a Sinne directly and peculiarly committed against the person of the

Holy Ghost, being the third in Trinity: For,

1 In that sense every Sinne, whatsoever is committed, is committed against the Holy Ghost; it being impossible for a man to sinne against any one person, but he must sinne against all, or to sinne against God, but hee must sinne against the Trinity, and by consequent against the Holy Ghost.

2 This were to lift up the Holy Ghost above the two other persons, that a Sinne committed against him only were unpardonable.

3 The Example that wee have here maketh it plaine: For the Sinne was directly committed against the person of Christ. So was *Julian* the Apostates.

4 It's a question whether these persons did so much as know that there is an Holy Ghost; and this (as shall appeare afterward) is not a Sin of Ignorance: as if a man should be so mad as to smite at the King, imagining him to be some begger.

By the Holy Ghost then, when we

we call this Sinne the Sinne against the Holy Ghost, by a Rhetoricall grace and ornament of speech you are to understand the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost: as wee say, a man sits or walks in the Sunne, when he sits or walks onely in the light of the Sunne. In this sense is the Holy Ghost said to be upon *Simeon*, though essentially and really he were no more upon him, than upon any other ordinary man in Ierusalem, but in respect of his gifts and graces only: And thus the Apostles are said by imposition of hands to give the Holy Ghost. What? the person himselfe? no; but his gifts. So that by Sinne against the Holy Ghost we are to understand a Sinne against the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; as a man may be said to sin against the King, not only when he smites or reviles his person; but when he offereth despite and disgrace unto any of his royall gifts; and so in like manner against any other.

Luke 2.25.

Acts 8. 17,18.

Hence arise these Conclusi-

ons

ons concerning this Sinne.

The first Conclusion.

This Sinne is not ones rising against God or Christ, in regard of some judgement or punishment present upon him. For judgements and punishments are not called the Holy Ghost in the word; though they come from God, and by consequent from the Holy Ghost. Besides, this Sinne is a sinne against the Grace of God; which punishments cannot bee but by accident. And therefore all such Sinnes as arise from a deep sence and apprehension of them, howsoever they may be great and grievous Sinnes, fearefull and horrible; yet this Sinne may bee of an higher nature than so, as shall appeare afterward, and of another kind.

Vse. This should teach us to use a temperate moderation in judging of those that we see in any judgement of God upon their bodies or goods to breake forth into any extremities of

of passion in word or deed against God, or against any part of Gods Truth: as we see it usuall with many so to do in extreame losses, hurts, agonies, pangs of sickneſſe, and such like.

Then belike *Iulian* the Apostata committed not this Sinne, when being deadly wounded, hee tooke of his blood, and flung it up into the aire, crying withall, *vicisti Galilee*, Thou hast overcome yet, O Galilean, at last.

Ob.

If *Iulian* had not committed this Sinne before in many vile and spightfull speeches against Christ & Christians, it could not so clearly be argued from that. And yet was that speech so horribly spightfull, that the smiting of him may seem rather a bare occasion than a cause of it; and he rather sheweth in it an obstinateneſſe in the Sin, as if he should said, Now thou hast done thy worſt, yet art thou still but a Galilean.

Answ.

But herein especially warineſſe of Censure is to be used concerning such as blaspheme in time of affliction,

ction, wound and torment of Conscience, when God, by reason of some sinne, pincheth, and racketh, and torureth the Conscience in that manner, that the party breaketh forth into strange, and direfull, and outragious blasphemies: that which God suffereth many to fall into, partly by hiding the merit and desert of Sinne, and partly by denying strength to beare the punishment inflicted. *Iob* himselfe was oft breaking forth into such passions against God.

Iob 9.17. & 10.16,18. & 16,14,17 & 24.12. & 30. 20, 26.

And yet this, though it bee not that unpardonable Sinne, it is notwithstanding a most fearefull Sinne, and a kinde of renouncing of God, and an holding of him to bee unjust, which hee cannot be, but hee must be no God. It were an horrible Sinne in a Childe to revile and reproach his naturall Father for some over-extreme correction, though naturall parents may therein overreach themselves. But for a Childe of God to revile and blaspheme, when God shall lay any Iudgement upon

upon him, and thereby to professe him an unjust God, who can no more be unjust than not be, when one should the rather study to please God the more, and argue the horriblenesse of Sinne by the horriblenes of punishment, is much more feare-full.

The second Conclusion.

This Sinne is committed against the love and favour of God, yea against the reall Love of God in the collation of a benefit and favour. And who cannot see that this is a Sinne of a farre higher nature, than to sinne against the wrath and justice of God? When a Childe shall rebell against his Father, or a Subject against his Prince for extremity and rigour, it is a Sinne; much more for justice and equity: but for love and favour and grace to revile them, is most odious and vile. So to revile and blaspheme God for his judgements & punishments, which are alwaies just and righteous, is horrible; but

but to revile him for his grace and favors is hideous and ghastly.

Use. To shew us what damnable wretches we are by nature, that turn all into poison and Sinne, making all things matter to feed sinne and rebellion against God. So that as a Woolfe, though he feed upon nothing but Lambe, yet still remaines in the nature of the Woolfe, and is the more woolvish rather than otherwise, and even turneth the flesh of a Lambe into his owne nature; even so naturally would wee doe with Gods favours and benefits, were we followed even with them alone.

To admonish us to take heed how we abuse any gift or grace of God to the dishonour of God. For whensoever wee so doe, wee are in the highway to this Sinne, and wee have our footsteps printed in the path that leadeth thereunto.

The third Conclusion.

The Sinne against the Holy Ghost

Ghost is not onely a Sinne against the Love and favour of God, or against God for his gifts and graces, but even a Sinne against the very gifts and graces themselves: and not a Sinne whereby we abuse those graces and gifts to other ends and purposes; but a Sinne whereby we oppugne, and resist, and disgrace, and wilfully deface the said graces directly and immediately. For Example; the Father gives his eldest Son money, the Prince his Subject a Iewell: this Sonne or this Subject spends this money or Iewell in gaming, gluttony, venery and ryot: this is an abuse both of Father and King, and of the gifts themselves also, to imploy them to such base uses. But this is a disgrace in a farre higher degree, that toucheth both more directly and immediately, when they shall offer disgrace to the gift it selfe, fling it away, deface it, trample it under their feet, or the like. All of us, when wee turne the graces of God into wantonnesse and vanity, into pride and vain-glory, doe

sinne

sinne both against God and his graces: But when we offer despight and indignity unto them of purpose and directly, this is a fearfull and horrible Sinne.

1 Note hence the vilenesse of our natures, and the rebelliousnesse of them, that doe not onely hate God, but hate the very gifts and graces also that come from God. Man many times may give a gift that is not worthy of any account, yea that deserveth disgrace: as if a King should give one of his Nobles in way of reward for some piece of service, a piece of bread, or some such trifle. But there is not the basest gift that God bestoweth, but it is worthy honour and esteeme, and is suches should make us love God the more.

2 When we feele our mindes rise and lift up themselves against any ordinance of God, which hee hath appointed for our good, it should humble us, and wee should feare the falling into this Sin. And how apt our natures are hereunto, may

may appeare by our often moiling and repining at the sacred ordinances of God, as the preaching of the Word, &c. Which are grudgings and spices of this disease.

Secondly, out of this Name is to be enquired, whether the Sin against the Holy Ghost, be a Sinne against those gifts that are in the person himselfe that commits the Sinne, or in the person of some other.

The answer is, that it is a Sinne partly against the gifts in themselves, and partly against the same in others: it's committed against both. A man would never in such a manner despight the Holy Ghost in himselfe, if he perceived it not in another; neither would he ever have despighted it in another, except it had been in himself. For there being in such wicked persons as these are, an inbred hatred unto all things that doe but savour of the Spirit of God; when being after some sort possessed with it themselves, they see others also to bee made partakers of it, this is it that makes their hearts to boile and

and broile within, and causeth them to breake forth into this blasphemy. And this is confirmed by our Example in this place. These Scribes and Pharisees had received the Holy Ghost, that is, the divine Illumination of the Holy Ghost: they saw with the very Eye of their Conscience, that Iesus the Sonne of the Virgin *Mary* was that Messias, that Christ, that Sonne of *David*; they saw it by that divine beame of light that streamed from his divine works: this light was odious and loathsome unto them; they hated and detested it above all things. But when they perceived it to spread it selfe unto others, and to be entertained and embraced of others, that made them in this manner to blaspheme the same.

Hence arise these Conclusions concerning this Sinne.

The first Conclusion.

That man committeth not the Sinne against the Holy Ghost, that hateth,

hateth, revileth, and persecuteth, though with the highest malice, any gift or grace of God in another, if that gift or grace be not in some measure in himselfe. For the Sinne against the Holy Ghost, is a Sinne against a gift received by the person that commits the Sinne, and not only against one received by another; but both doe necessarily concurre, the one is not without the other.

Use. In this respect Paul himselfe before his conversion, though hee was a might persecuter of all Christians, and went from place to place, panting and breathing after Christian bloud, and blaspheming Christ; yet forasmuch as hee was not illuminated by the Holy Ghost, but did it in meere and grosse ignorance, he committed not this Sinne. Hence also it followeth, that all the blasphemies and revilings of those that are not contrarily perswaded in their Consciences, are not this Sinne. Neither had this Blasphemy of the Scribes and Pharisees, how vile and odious soever, been

that

that unpardonable Sinne, if they had not been illuminated, and had spoken as they thought. Neither is it any question, but that *Paul*, that had so deep an hand in persecuting Christians, had as deep a tongue in blaspheming Christ; for they ever use to goe together: and yet obtaining pardon, it is thereby apparent that he sinned not this unpardonable Sinne.

1. *Tim.* 1. 13, 16.

2 Further this sheweth the difficulty of judging this Sinne. Those that do commit it, of all other least judge themselves for it. And it is a wonderfull hard thing to judge of it in another. There must be a concurrence of many circumstances to it, as shall after appeare. I may easily judge when a man is a blasphemer and a persecutor; but to judge whether he blasphemeth and persecuteth as *Saul* did, or as these Pharisees, is hard. And wee must take heed, not onely how wee doe headily shut Heaven-gates against our selves, but against others. It is a fleshly and a carnall delight, not a spirituall, that

is

is taken at the consideration of persecutors their future destruction.

The second conclusion.

Those that love, nourish, cherish, admire, extoll, or reward any Grace in another, that in respect of themselves they hate, scorne and deride, doe not commit this Sinne. For this is a Sinne (as appeares, not by our former grounds onely, but by our Example) that they which commit, commit not against the Holy Ghost in themselves alone, but in others, and more against that in others than in themselves. For their gall burſteth not indeed, untill they see that in another which they have in themselves.

Vſe. By this wee may know what to judge of a number of vile, and prophane, and blasphemous persons in the World, given to drunkennesse, uncleannesse, cursing, blaspheming in their own persons, that notwithstanding in their children & neighbours love and like the contrary graces:

graces: whereas he that committeth this blasphemy, would never endure his Childe to blesse that which hee doth so direfully curse. Would these Scribes and Pharisees have endured their Children to have professed or blessed Christ, whom themselves thus blasphemed?

The third Conclusion.

Hee that in word or deed sinneth against that gift and grace of the Holy Ghost in another, which is also in himselfe, and yet hateth not the gift in himself, commits not that unpardonable Sinne.

Vse. Our experience teacheth us, that many in envy and malice unto others, will disgrace and revile many excellent gifts and graces of God in others, and that even therefore because they love them, and adore them too much in themselves, and would have the onely honour of them. Now he that beares such an affection, as to envy a grace thus in another, and therefore to blas-

pheme,

pheme, because he would have the glory of such a grace in himselfe alone, doth not commit this Sinne, because in this Sinne, a man hates the Grace, as in others, so in himselfe.

The fourth Conclusion.

If a man doe therefore spite and blaspheme a gift and grace of the Spirit in another, because it is not in himselfe (as many doe) it is not this Sinne. For this is a Signe, hat hee doth not malice the gift, but the person.

A third point to be enquired into concerning this Name, is against what kinde of gifts the Sin against the Holy Ghost is committed. For every good thing may bee called a gift of the Holy Ghost, because every good thing is a gift of God, who is Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost; our health, our strength, our activity, beauty, &c. But yet these are not those gifts that are called the Holy Ghost in Gods Word. But the

Word of God endited by the Holy Ghost, hath appropriated this name unto certaine speciall gifts, not of the Body, but of the Minde. A man that having bin sick, hath recovered his health, is not said to have received the Holy Ghost; though the health hee hath received be a gift of the Holy Ghost. A man that hath lost an hand or an eare, cannot in Divinity bee said to have lost the Holy Ghost, though both of them bee his gifts. So of Beauty; and of the Actions proceeding from these bodily gifts. Hee that hath the gift of running, of wrestling, of any other like exercise, should abuse the Holy Ghost: if hee should say that hee overranne such a man by the gift of the Holy Ghost, where the Scripture hath curiously affected, appropriated and enclosed a Name, wee must not make it common. The Name Church is generall, signifying any company gathered together. But the Word of God having appropriated it to a company of such persons, as are assembled for the per-

Ἐκκλησία. Act. 19. 32, 39, 40.

performance of holy duties, it were grosse prophanenesse to call a company of Artificers or Tradesmen meeting to consult of common businesses, or to make merry together, a Church. The gifts of the Holy Ghost therefore are to be understood of the minde of man. And surely all the good gifts of mans minde, as wit, reason, justice, mercy, knowledge, &c. are the gifts of the Holy Ghost; but yet all of them are not these gifts that are called the Holy Ghost. For Example; He that hath learned Arithmeticke, Astronomy, the Tongues; hee that is a great Statesman, and knowes all the policies of all Common-wealths, cannot in these be said to have the Holy Ghost.

But to come to the point, the gift that is here meant, is that supernaturall Illumination of the Holy Ghost, wherewith hee illightneth the minde with the knowledge of the Gospell, or any point or parcell thereof: And the Sinne against it, when men are so mad and furious

against the light that shineth to bring Salvation, that they doe what lies in them to darken and extinguish it, and to put out both their owne eyes, and the eyes of others, that they might not see it. The excellency of the Gift argues the vilenesse of the Sinne. The bodily light, and bodily eye-sight is an excellent gift, to travellours especially that goe dangerous wayes for bogs and pits, &c. How much more excellent is that spirituall Light, that directeth men here travelling amids infinite dangers without it unavoydable, to the place of their eternall abode? It were an horrible villany for a man to put out both his owne and other mens bodily eyes; but to put out their spirituall eyes, whereby of necessity they must needs eternally miscarry, is even a villany of villanies, of all villanies the most villanous.

The Conclusion then hence arising is this. That they that scorne, deride, contemne, blaspheme any bodily or naturall gift and grace of God

God in man, though never so spightfully and maliciously, commit not therein this Sinne. This Sinne is a contempt of higher graces and gifts.

Lastly, our Saviour calleth it a Blasphemy: Which appellation will also give some further light and insight into this Sinne. To blaspheme, generally, signifies to hurt one in Word or Speech. But specially it is taken for a spightfull and malicious railing upon, reviling and disgracing one. To blaspheme the Holy Ghost, then, is openly to raile upon, and revile and give foule words of the Holy Ghost, that is, of the Truth of God reviled by the Holy Ghost.

Hence gather we these Conclusions concerning this Sinne.

The first Conclusion.

This Sinne is not committed in thought alone, but in word also, or in that which is proportionable unto it; to wit, writing, or other such signes as may testifie and bring ones

mind to another. For words are nothing but notes and signes of those things that are in our minds, wherby we make known our notions, desires, & affections to others; writing, and other kinde of Signes, are the signes of words. Now there are two sorts of Signes, one ambiguous and conjecturall, another certaine and evident. And there is some difference betweene ambiguous or uncertaine signes, and words; for some will not speake in words that which they wil shew by some signes and tokens notwithstanding. Many will shew many signes and tokens, and dumb shewes of discontent and of prophanenesse, which they will not yet shew in words. But there are some and certaine signes and tokens, and of such it is here meant.

Hence it appeares that this is no smothered and dissembled Sinne, that lies lurking in the secrets of the heart or soule, or that dares not to shew his head. There are many grosse and wicked imaginations in mans minde, as also affections and desire,

desires, which himselfe also nourisheth and feedeth within himselfe, but he will not suffer to goe abroad; yea for the further hiding of them, many will in words deny, renounce, sweare, forsweare and abjure them. But this is none of those modest and shamefaced Sins, that blush to looke a man in the face; but an impudent, shamelesse, brazen-faced Sinne, who is then in her pride, when most gaze upon her. This Sinne makes no dumbe shewes, clips not the Kings language, but speaks plainely and broadly.

The second Conclusion.

To call in question the blessed Truth (though against Conscience) to wrangle and dispute against it with some kinde of heate, is not to commit this Sinne; though it be a Sinne. For this is not properly to blaspheme; which is more than simply to reason against, dispute and oppose.

Yet such as pride themselves, and

whose vile glory to maintaine error, and to sophisticate the holy and divine Truth of God, had need to beware lest they passe from the one to the other.

The third Conclusion.

A simple deniall of any divine Truth, even of the highest, even of the Trinity, of Christ, of God, of the Gospell, of Salvation by Christ, of the Resurrection, of Heaven, of Hell, is not this Sinne. For though these in a generall sense be Blasphemies and horrible Sinnes; yet take Blasphemy in the proper sense, which is here meant, for a railing and reviling speech, and it will not hold in a simple deniall; it being one thing to deny and reject, and another to revile and raile.

This is cleerely set before our eyes in this Example. They doe not barely and simply deny Christ to bee the Messias; but adjoyne unto the same odious, vile and contumelious Speeches. So that the

Sinne

Sinne against the Holy Ghost is a greater Sinne than the bare deniall of God. If this had been the question betweene the Iewes and the Pharisees, whether Iesus were the Messias, and the Pharisees had either denied their Conclusion or Argument, and gone no further, they had not had this Sinne. For thus farre in some cases of tryall, and further than this may even the children of God goe. *Peter* denied Christ, and against his Conscience he denied him; yet sinned he not this Sin, but received mercy. Much lesse do Pagans and Infidels, Turks and Barbarians, that ignorantly doe the same.

The fourth Conclusion.

A deniall of any, even the greatest divine Truth, that is, though with protestation, swearing, forswearing, cursing and abjuration, is not this Sinne. For though every vaine Oath, even for the Truth, bee some kinde of Blasphemy; yet to

ratifie and confirme errour, yea the grosseſt errours, with oaths and abjurations, are not Blaſphemies in ſtrict and proper ſenſe.

Mat.26.74. Hence *Peter*, who did not onely deny, but forſweare Chriſt, yea anathematiſed himſelfe if hee knew Chriſt, was notwithſtanding free from this Sinne, though hee ſinned againſt both knowledge and Conſcience. So that hee that commits blaſphemy againſt the Holy *Ghoſt*, commits a greater Sinne than hee doth, that denies and renounceth and forſweares Chriſt.

By this alſo it appeares, that the ſimple Sinne of Apoſtaſie is not the Sinne againſt the Holy Ghoſt. For he is an Apoſtata, that having profeſſed Chriſt and the *Goſpell*, doth after deny and renounce the ſame; but that a man may do, and yet not commit this Sinne.

The

The third part.

Of the Nature of this Sinne.

Hitherto of the Name of this Sinne. Now followeth the Sinne it selfe, which, duely weighed and scanned, will direct us indeed to the true knowledge of the Sinne against the Holy Ghost. For the Sinne here committed being that Sinne; the true description of the Sinne here committed, will describe the Sinne against the Holy Ghost.

The Sinne then here committed (as appeares by all the Circumstances of this History) is an open, confident, and desperate opposition unto the publique profession of the Gospell; wherein contrary to knowledge and conscience, they freely, wilfully, spightfully, and malitiously

ously raile against and revile the same.

1. That this their Sin was a sin of Opposition, appeares plainely. For in the committing of it, they directly opposed themselves to these Iewes that professed Christ, being touched with his miracles.

2 That it was an opposition to the Gospell, it is apparent. For they opposed to this Article of the Gospell, that Iesus was the Messias.

3. That it was an opposition to the profession of the Gospell, appeares; in that it did arise upon the peoples profession.

4 That it was an open opposition, appeares. For it was in the face, presence, and hearing of the multitude.

5 That it was confident and desperate, appeares by the tenor of all the words.

6 That it was contrary to conscience & knowledge, appears both by our Saviour Christs conviction, and the monstrous absurdities that they were driven unto therein.

7 That

7 That they did it freely and willfully, appeares by the tenor of the Text.

8 That spightfully and maliciously, is apparent: For they spit out their gall against Christ in the most odious manner that may bee.

And this may serve to shew the detestablenesse of this Sin, and the horrible impiety of them that commit the same.

Now it remaines that from hence we gather the description in general of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, which must needs be the same with this.

The Sinne against the Holy Ghost then is an open and malitious opposition made unto the professors of the Gospell for the Gospels sake, wherein, contrary to knowledge and conscience, a man doth freely, willfully, desperately, spightfully revile the Author and Professors thereof.

This according to the judgement of most Divines, is the nature and quality

quality of this Sinne: For the better understanding whereof; we will,

1 Explaine the words;

2 Prove the Truth; and

3 Shew the horriblenesse of the Sinne.

1 It is an Opposition: which is not a bare conceit, imagination, affirmation or assertion. For though these be where there is an opposition; yet these may be without opposition. But opposition is when a man of purpose setteth himselfe against another. For Example; a man in armes on horsebacke with speare in hand, though hee ride and runne, and shake his speare never so much, yet except there bee a person, to whom he opposeth himselfe, he cannot in so doing be said to make opposition; and yet he that maketh opposition, useth no other kindes of motion. So that admit a man were so wicked as to revile and blaspheme alone by himselfe; yet such a reviling and blaspheming is no opposition. Againe, Opposition is a mutuall confronting of two Opposites,

posites, when the one setteth it selfe against the other. For hee cannot be said to make opposition, that goeth or holdeth with another, or that pursueth one that flieth away. This Sinne therefore, being a sinne of Opposition, is not committed with those that are of the same wicked mind, or that do not hold any contrary part.

2 An open or publique Opposition, is that which is not only proclaimed, but acted before the faces of men. It is a solemne opposition in the presence of others. So that it is as a solemne combate.

3 It is also confident, not a fearefull and timorous opposition, but with all resolution and boldnes. Not such an Opposition, as when a man is afraid of himselfe, or runnes away from his owne shadow. So that the Foole that saith in his heart, *There is no God*, but dares not say it in words, and that boldly too, even to the faces of them that hold the contrary, is not guilty of this Sinne. *Psal.* 14. 1.

4 It's

4 It's against the professors of the Gospell, the holy and religious men of God, who in a speciall manner represent God: these are the persons that in this Sin they oppose themselves against.

5 For the Gospels sake: this is the very cause of their Opposition, not for any other by-respect.

6 Wherein they revile, not the persons so much as the Gospel, especially professed and embraced.

7 Freely; without force or constraint.

8 Against knowledge and conscience, not in simplicity and Ignorance.

9 Wilfully; against all good means to the contrary.

10 Desperately; contemning all the mischiefes that may follow.

11 Malitiously; from an heart in a speciall manner set on fire by Satan against God and all goodnes.

Now that this Sinne is such as is here described.

1 This

1 This description is agreeable to our precedent, and to other precedents; to wit, that of *Julian* the Apostata, &c.

2 This is such a Sinne, as is not possible for any that hath the least degree of grace and sanctification in him to commit.

3 They that commit the Sinne here described, are as farre from all grace and goodnesse, as a man can imagine; neither can the wit of man imagine an higher wickednesse.

The greatnesse of it may thus appeare.

1 Not to love or respect the professors of the *Gospell* is a great Sinne, and an injury unto Christ, yea, a kind of enmity unto him.

For. 1 They that so doe breake the speciall commandement of the *Gospell*, a new Commandement that Christ gave unto his Disciples, and in them to all that looke to bee saved by him, that they love one another, as Christ hath loved them. *Iohn* 13. 34, 35.

2 There

2. There are no persons more lovely than they if men had eyes to see the same. For they are not onely sacramentally, but really washed from the guilt of all their Sinnes; they are new Creatures, born againe of the Spirit of God; they are the living members of Iesus Christ; they are quickned by the Spirit of God; they are heires of the Kingdome of Heaven, Temples of the Holy Ghost; the Sonnes and Children of God. What greater or more admirable matters can there be deserving love and admiration than these? So that not to love the true professors of the Gospell, is to professe a contempt, and a light regard of Regeneration, of the Spirit of God, of the bloud of Christ, of Christ, of Heaven.

3 No persons deserve more love than they, if men were not wonderfully besotted. The Husband of the Wife, the Father of the Childe cannot deserve so much.

Semen sanctum statum in terræ. Isa. 6. 13.

For 1 Vnder God they are the very

very pillars and foundations of the Earth. It's for their ſake that the Earth endureth; when their number is fulfilled, the World ſhall have an end.

2 They are the cauſes of all the bleſſings that are in the places where they live: They are men that love all, hurt none, are ready to do good unto all. Their prayers pul downe from God many ſpeciall bleſſings upon the very wicked. They deſire earneſtly, and ſeeke after the converſion and ſalvation of all men. They rejoyce in the good of all, they ſorrow for the hurt of any; where in can there be greater deſert?

But they that commit this Sinne, doe not onely not affect them, but ſet themſelves againſt them; are oppoſites and adverſaries unto them. And this is a greater degree, to bee profeſſed enemies unto profeſſors of the Goſpell, than to be bare contemners of them; yea, this muſt needs argue much wickedneſſe in the heart.

For 1 All true profeſſors of the Goſpell

Gospell are honest men, and good men. And for men to bee professed enemies and opposites to honest and good men must needs argue a wicked heart.

2 A man cannot oppose himselfe, and be an enemy unto a true professor of the Gospell, but hee must needs bean enemy, and oppose himselfe some way or other to the Gospell it selfe, and to Christ. For these are so neere united the one to the other, that one cannot touch the one, but hee must withall touch the other.

3 He that stands in opposition to the professors of the Gospell, cannot but be in league and amity with the enemies thereof.

2 For a man to hate the Children of God in regard of their personall infirmities, or in regard of some injuries received at their hands were a sinne grievous and inexcusable. For besides that it is evill and unwarrantable upon such grounds, to hate any whomsoever; there are those lovely parts and graces in all good

good Christians that may wel more than countervaile and weigh down any such wants and imperfections, as may be in any of them, and such wrongs and injuries as by occasion thereof they may offer unto any.

But to hate them (as in this case) not in regard of any such speciall quarrell against them, or in respect of any private injury and wrong received from them, but to dislike (yea to spite and maligne) them for their very profession; it is not so much to hate Christ for them, as to hate Christ himselfe, and Christianity in them, and to hate them for Christ.

3 For a Turke or a Pagan that never knew better (out of a love unto, and zeale of that way and worship that he hath ever been trained up in) to oppose himself in such sort to the professors of true piety, were a fearefull course, and likely to bring upon the head of such a one, a farre greater than ordinary measure of Gods wrath; the certainty whereof, by many dreadfull judgements inflicted

inflicted upon heathen persecutors of his people, God hath sealed up in sundry ages at severall times.

But for one that himselfe hath acknowledged Christ, been enlightened by the Spirit of Christ, convinced in Conscience of the truth of the Gospell, yea, and outwardly made profession of obedience thereunto; for such a one, I say, spightfully to oppose himselfe against the professors of that which hee hath formerly been instructed in, possessed with, convinced of, and professed to imbrace; what is it but wittingly, and wilfully contrary to knowledge and conscience to goe out of Christs camp, to turne head against him, and to wage warre against those that adhere still unto him? which is yet far more fearefull than the former.

4 For a traiterous wretch, having so gon out from his Sovereign, to goe on obstinately in his rebellious courses, without any thought of repenting or returning againe to him, neglecting all such courses whereby

whereby pardon might be procured and favour regained; and that when opportunity of atchieving it, were oft offered unto him, were a very damnable and desperate course.

But in this kinde the case is yet farre worse than so: For those that commit this Sinne, not onely refuse to use any means of recovery, but even contumeliously reject Gods mercy tendred unto them in the Gospell; tread the pardon it selfe as it were under their feet; trample upon Christ the person that purchased it for them; despight the Spirit of God, that revealed, and that should seale it up to them, and malitiously impugne and oppose those that either have accepted, or make shew to accept of it. And what can there be imagined more hideous, or more hellish than this is?

The

The fifth part.

Of the Conviction of this Sin.

HItherto of the Conception and the Birth, of the Name and the Nature of this Sin. Now the fifth point followeth, which is the Conviction of it; wherein our Saviour laboureth to shew, that the Blasphemy they uttered in this open and shameful manner was against Conscience, and of malice and despight; and that therein they did openly rebell against God, and set themselves against the kingdome of God.

They laid to our Saviour Christs charge, that (as if he were an Arch-Magitian, or Conjurer, or a Practitioner of the black Art) he wrought those great and marvellous works, which hee did, by the power and

help of *Beelzebub* the prince of devils.

Our Saviour on the other side:

1 By reasons disproves their blasphemous assertion.

2 By other reasons proves the contrary truth; to wit, that what he did, he did not by the power of Satan, but by the power of *Gods* Spirit.

Where before wee descend to particulars, let us make some generall use of this practise of our Saviour. Hee pronounceth not the sentence of condemnation for this Sin, before hee have by evident reason convinced them to be guilty of it. It is against the Law of Love and Charity to judge and condemne a person of any crime, without just reason and good cause. And the greater the crime is, the greater must our presumptions be, before wee must condemne. Before therefore wee lay to the charge of any this high and horrible Sinne, it behoves us to be able by sound and sufficient reason to convince them first of it.

Accusers

Accusers have ever been esteemed odious, except there have bin some just cause; much more false Accusers: and the greater the crimes are, the more odious they are, that accuse any falsly of them. It must therefore needs be most odious, to accuse one falsly of such a crime without evident Conviction, as is of so high and hainous quality as this is.

And as this is a great Sin against others, so is it no lesse Sinne against our selves; especially in laying to our owne charge this Sinne above all other. For howsoever in other sinnes, I may doe another more hurt than my selfe; yet if I could lay this Sinne to the charge, though of the greatest innocent in the World, I should not doe him so much hurt, as in laying it upon false surmises and grounds upon my selfe. For anothers Soule is never the worse for my false judgement. But in this case especially, if wee feed and nourish such conceits, many direfull and dreadfull Effects will follow in our owne Soules. For,

1 Hee that accuseth and condemneth himselfe of this Sinne, he thrusts God out of his roome, and sits himselfe therein, when without warrant from the Word, and direction from those that have better insight in the same, hee takes authority to arraigne, judge, and condemne himselfe, when hee is not his owne, but Gods, to iudge and condemne. Men must assent to Gods judgement and sentence revealed in his Word, and measure their judgements and condemnations by it; not judge or condemne of themselves. As a man, except hee have commission from God, may not judge or condemne another to a bodily death; so much lesse may hee judge or condemne himsele to eternall death. We have power to deserve Hell; but we have no power to condemne our selves to Hell.

2 Hee that yeeldeth to this Temptation, what doth hee in effect but give himselfe to the Devill, acknowledging himselfe of right

to

to belong to him, and not to God, and to bee actually a subject of his Kingdome. For hee that shall passe such a condemnation as this against himselfe, knoweth that there are but two spirituall Kingdomes, hee knoweth that the Kingdome of God doth not belong to such a Sinner; and that therefore he must needs belong to the other. Now were it not a great presumption to give away a Soule, which Christ hath reckoned at so high a price, that he hath purchased it with his own precious bloud, without a commission from God.

3 He doth what he can immediately to plunge his Soule into Hell-fire. For how can he chuse but bee possessed with hellish agonies and torments, when hee shall judge himselfe past all hope of mercy? And if it bee a sinne for a man, be he never so vile a wretch, to cast his body into the fire or water, or to set but his Neighbours or his owne house on fire; how much more then to fling

his Soule into such spirituall torments?

4 Hee striketh dead, or casts into a swound all the graces of God in him; takes away their spirit, their life, their motion. For this course it quencheth the light of Faith, cooleth the heate of Love, killeth the heart of Hope, and maketh a man wholly unapt to doe God any good service. For how can hee that despaires of mercy, pray unto God? What good will it doe a man with teares to confesse his sinnes to God, when he knows and assures himselfe hee shall be damned for them? What heart can hee have to thinke on God, when he shall judge that all those blessings, that God hath bestowed upon him, shall but work to his further condemnation?

5 Though it be most certaine that they that are afraid that they have committed this Sinne, neither ever have, nor ever shall commit this Sinne, so long as they continue so affected; yet to admit of such conceits,

conceits, is the next way in the world to bring a man to the next doore in committing it. For as nothing is more powerfull to beget love and obedience, than a perſwaſion of our Salvation: ſo on the contrary, nothing is more effectuall to beget in us a ſpite and malice to Chriſt and the Goſpell, than a perſwaſion of our damnation.

Now before that the Evangeliſt ſetteth downe the Arguments of Chriſts Conviction, he premiſeth this, that Chriſt knowing their Thoughts, ſaid unto them. And why ſaith he ſo, when in all likelyhood hee heard their words, and in his anſwer confuted them? By this it ſhould ſeeme that the Sinne againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is committed in Thought rather than in Word.

Nay: by this it appeares that it is not committed in word onely, but in thought alſo. But that they are thoughts breaking forth in words alſo, appeares, not only by

the Name Blasphemy; but by the words of our Saviour, *Whosoever shall speake against*, &c. *verse* 32. Neither (reserving due reverence unto them that may have better reason to judge otherwise) doe I take this to bee meant of those thoughts by which together with their words they committed this Sinne, which were rather of affection; but of some other thoughts of judgement. They made no doubt of this in their minds, that the Devils that were cast out by Christ, suffered manifest violence; and that they were not cast out by any voluntary compact or colourable force, but by a violent power and strength: upon which our Saviour worketh. For else his discourse and reasoning that hee here useth with them, had been vain. For he takes it as granted, that Satan had violence offered; that his expulsion was by force, &c. This then is the meaning, that Christ not onely hearing their blasphemous words, but knowing also the very secret

Imagina-

Imaginations of their hearts, goeth about to confound them, and by evidence of Reaſon grounded upon their owne Thoughts and Imaginations to convince them of a ſpitefull and malitious blaſphemy.

The Vſe hereof.

1 This Sinne ſhews how hard it is to convince a man of this Sin: Bee their words and deeds never ſo ſpightfull and malitious, yet you ſhall never make them acknowledge it, except you deale with their thoughts, and wreſtle and ſtrive with them. Elſe what need Chriſt have medled here with their thoughts? If hee had gone no further than their words, one would think he ſhould have matter enough againſt them; but he is faine to go further. And therefore though a man could dive into the deepeſt ſecrets of ones Soule that hath committed this Sinne, though he could pull as it were his heart out of his body, though hee could ſhew him all the ſecrets of it as it were in a glaſſe, how his words and affecti-

ons are set against his knowledge and conscience; yet it will not serve the turne. Christ had more advantage of these wretches than wee have, and could have gathered more out of their wicked words than wee can; and yet notwithstanding hee deales not with words onely, but with thoughts, and yet cannot bring them to acknowledge this Sinne; though 'tis likely hee pricked their Conscience with it, and in it convinced them of it.

2 In that our Saviour deales thus with their Thoughts and the secrets of their Soule, and withall is faine to beat upon them with so many reasons to prove them guilty of such a Sinne: this shewes the property of those that have committed this Sinne, not to acknowledge it when it is committed, much lesse to be grieved and troubled that they have committed it. So that so farre are they from acknowledging it themselves, that though Christ Jesus himself should

lay

lay it to their charge, yet they would not yeeld to it. And therefore this is an undoubted signe of one that hath not committed this Sinne, to feare, and accuse himselfe of the committing of it. For,

1 This is the property of Sinners to hide and conceale, and not to acknowledge a Sinne. And the greater mens Sinnes are, the loather are they to acknowledge them. But this is the greatest Sinne that is.

2 The greater Sinner, the harder Heart, and the more senseless of Sinne: the harder heart, the further from remorse.

3 This is a Sinne of malice and spite; and we know a man will rather break his heart than acknowledge such a Sinne.

4 They that commit this Sinne are most graceless: But there is much grace in this, to feare and suspect our selves in this Sinne.

Now I come to the particulars wherein Christ opposeth unto their Blasphemy; not so much labouring therein

therein their conversion as their conviction, that from it he might passe to their sentence of condemnation.

The question that Christ disputes, is, whether hee did cast out Devils through *Beelzebub*.

The first Argument whereby he confutes it, and by consequent convinces them of furious spite and malice, is this:

If I through the power of *Beelzebub* have cast out these Devils, then is the kingdome of Satan divided, and at war in it selfe.

But the kingdome of Satan is not divided, and at war in it selfe.

Therefore I cast them not out through the power of *Beelzebub*.

The first part is true, except they should imagine that herein the Devils plaid one with another, and in mockery or some policie made opposition one unto another. Which howsoever in words they had been likely to have done, if they had had so much cunning then, as some in our times now have; yet in their Conscience, which our Saviour

our

our smites at, they could not, because it could not possibly suggest unto them the least colour of a reason, why the Devils should, as it were upon a Stage play their parts in that manner: but they discerned a manifest enmity between that Spirit by which Christ did this worke, and those that were cast out; and therfore Christ proves it not, but lets it passe.

Whence learne we this practicall method of Christ, in dealing with desperate Sinners, not so much to strive to stop their mouths, as to touch their conscience, and therfore not to weary our selves with endlesse wranglings & brawles, as if it were possible to stay their thoughts: It's enough if we can convince their conscience; which when we have done, let us leave them and their Conscience together to decide the controversie. If men could observe but in some measure this Rule, the World had not bin so full of endles controversies as it is. Christ in this controversy go's no further then so: as if he had said; you see & hear, you Scribes and

and Pharisees, and your consciences tell you; and though you bee impudent enough to deny a manifest truth, yet you cannot gainsay this; that there is betweene that Spirit which I use, and those that are cast out, a perfect hatred and jarre, and a most fiery dissention. And therefore if my Spirit (as you spightfully and blasphemously affirme against knowledge and Conscience) bee *Beelzebub*; then is there hatred, division, warre, tumult, and civill dissention amongst the Devils, one seeking the ruine and overthrow of another, and labouring to cut the throat of another. This proposition Christ leaves, though it might bee cavilled at; and a man may dwell all the dayes of his life in cleering of such a proposition as this, if hee would go about to cleer all oppositions and cavils.

Hee passeth to the second part, which is this; But the Kingdome of Hell is not divided against it selfe: as if hee should say; But it is too grosse and absurd for any, that

are

are masters of common wit and reason, to imagine, that Hell is up in armes against it selfe, and that there is deadly feud amongst the Devils of Hell, that they warre and fight in this maner, as you are eye-witnesses of, one against another among themselves.

This our Saviour Christ proves by a short reason. For then Satans Kingdome could not stand and remaine, but should be neere unto an end. For that is the state of all Kingdomes rent with civill dissensions. So that by this reason, either they must herein speake malitiously and against Conscience, or else they must of necessity maintaine the former absurdities. And they were no doubt speciall positions of the Pharisees, which Christ here frames his Argument of.

The second Argument is thus conceived.

By that Spirit, which your Children cast out Devils by, doe I cast out Devils.

But your Children cast not out Devils

Devils through *Beelzebub*.

Therefore neither do I cast them out by him.

In this Argument there is some doubt what is meant by their Children. The best of our Interpreters hold it to be meant flatly of our Saviour Christs Disciples. But I must crave leave to dissent with reverence from them: For, 1 there is no more reason to call his Disciples their Children, than himselfe.

2 In holding that Christ cast out Devils through *Beelzebub*, they must needs hold that his Disciples must doe it by the same Spirit. For it were senselesse to imagine, that the Disciple should doe it by the Spirit of God, and the Master by the Devill.

3 By Children are not unusually meant Scholers and Disciples. Hence by the Children or Sonnes of the Prophets, are meant those that sate at their feet to learn: as *Paul* might be called one of *Gamaliels* Children or Sonnes.

And

And therefore I take it, that Chriſt means it of ſome of the Phariſees owne diſciples and ſcholers, that were no profeſſed Diſciples of Chriſt: which, as it ſeemes, in thoſe times had ſpeciall Gifts to caſt out Devils, for the grace and countenance and confirmation of the true Religion, which the Phariſees ſitting in *Moſes* chaire, profeſſed and taught: And of theſe, I am perſwaded, Chriſt ſpeaketh in this place.

4 Hee ſpeaketh of ſome neere unto them, when hee ſaith, They ſhall bee your Iudges: meaning ſuch as they could not with any honeſty appeale from; whereas they might from Chriſts Diſciples.

5 Some ſuch are mentioned, whom the Diſciples found caſting out Devils. *Mar. 9.38. Luke 9.49.*

6 Except this be the meaning, I am not able to diſcern what force in the world there ſhould be in this argument. For any man may ſee that our Savior taketh it as granted, that the

the Pharisees did hold and maintaine, that the dispossession that their Children used was the act of God, and done by the finger of God. And if it bee so understood, there is great force in the Reason, and it's a stronger than the former. And this is the sense of it.

If I cast out Devils to no other end and purpose in substance, than many of your honored and renowned Schollers doe, then I doe it not by *Beelzebub*.

But I doe it to no other end than they, but to confirme the same doctrine and faith.

Therefore I doe it not by *Beelzebub*.

The proposition is evident: for els their ends would have been as contrary as their Spirits.

The assumption no doubt was as evident. For Christ wrought these Miracles, to confirme no other Religion or Doctrine, than what in substance the Exorcists did, set downe in *Moses* and the Prophets, howsoever there were some difference

rence in the manner. So that if the Miracles of Chriſt were as effectuall againſt the kingdome of Satan, as their Exorciſts were, and as powerfull to confirme the Kingdome of *God*, and had no other apparent uſe; this Argument muſt needs be very good: (howſoever in their formes there were ſome differences:) For is it not abſurd to imagine that Chriſt ſhould uſe the very ſame thing againſt Satan that the Iewes did; and to the very ſame end, to confirme the Kingdome of God, and yet doe it by a contrary Spirit, (though it were done after a diverſe manner?) Suppoſe two perſons ſet upon ſome notorious Thiefe, the one ſmites him with a Sword, the other with a Piſtoll, and both have no other end but to ſave men from robbing: now were it not abſurd, that for the very act doing, the one of them ſhould bee juſtified, and the other condemned as a friend and welwiller to Thieves and Robbers?

The

The third Argument is this:

If I in your Conſcience caſt out Devils by the power only of *Gods* Spirit; then have you ſpightfully blaſphemed the Holy *Ghoſt* in avowing this publiquely, that I did it by *Beelzebub*.

But I, in your owne Conſcience, have caſt out Devils onely by the power of *Gods* Spirit.

You have therefore in ſo ſaying ſpightfully blaſphemed the Holy *Ghoſt*.

The propoſition is cleere, and cannot be denied.

The Aſſumption hee thus proveth.

That Spirit that offereth violence unto the Devill, and by ſtrong hand caſteth him againſt his will out of his ſtrong holds and poſſeſſions, is only the Spirit of God.

But you in your Conſcience know that that Spirit whereby I caſt out Devils, is no other than the Spirit of God.

And by conſequent you herein wilfully fight againſt God and his King-

Kingdome, which in my workes have ſhined before you, and have offered themſelves unto you.

The Aſſumption he ſetteth forth by a plain and familiar compariſon; reſembling that Spirit to a ſtrong and mighty man, that goeth into another mans houſe, and by force in deſpight of him binds him and robs him.

The fourth Argument is contained in this Sentence, Hee that is not with me, is againſt mee, &c. and is thus framed:

If the Spirit of *God* were not with mee, and did not build with me in the work that I labour in, then would the Holy *Ghoſt* ſet himſelfe againſt me, and deſtroy whatſoever I doe:

But the Holy Ghoſt is not againſt mee, nor deſtroyeth what I build.

The Spirit of *God* therefore is with me, and buildeth with mee in my worke.

And this Argument muſt needs be unanſwerable, if it be conſidered, that

that if Christ had been an Impostor indeed, and a deceiver, hee had been the most abominable Blasphemer upon Earth: and exercising these tricks only in the Church, to pull men from Religion; the Spirit of God would never endure it.

All these Considerations then laid together, it is too too apparent that these Scribes and Pharisees did most spightfully, and malitiously revile and blaspheme the Holy Ghost. And thus you see how palpably our Saviour Christ, by strong and evident Arguments, convinced them thereof.

Now this is the generall and main use of this point; To imitate our Saviour Christ.

1 In judging of the true nature of this Sin in generall.

2 In being able to detect it in speciall, in those persons that shall commit it. Without the former a man cannot doe the latter: and without the latter a man hath no use of the former.

Now

Now the knowledge of the Nature of this Sin hath these uses.

1 It serves to shew us the horrible corruption of our Nature, what a monstrous Rebellion lies and lurks in us; if wee should bee left to our selves, like enough to breake forth from us. Who would thinke it possible, that there should be so much corruption in man, as to fall into such a Sin against the Saviour of the World?

2 It serves to teach us, that Gods mercy is mingled with wisedome; that it is not a mad or a foolish mercy; that he is not one that will cast his mercy away hand over head; that he cannot endure to have his grace and mercy wilfully and maliciously abused.

3 It serves especially to comfort those who are afflicted in Conscience for their Sinne, and are by Satan perswaded that they have committed this Sinne; who in this case can have no comfort but by the knowledge of the Nature of it.

4 It serves to stir us up to thankfulnesse;

fulnesse, that God hath so stinted us, and kept in the Corruption of our Nature so farre forth, that wee have not fallen into it.

The knowledge how to detect it, serves for these uses:

1 That we may not labour in vaine, in endeavouring to cure that which is remediless, by casting of holy things to Dogs, and praying for such. *Mat.7.6. 1 John 5.16.*

2 That both we may our selves, and bee a means that others also may fly from them, and avoid them.

3 That the certaine consideration of their end and confusion may lift up our heads above those evils that they are wont to inflict upon the Church and Children of God, and the professors of the Truth and Gospell of Christ.

Now for the detection of this Sinne in those that have committed it, it is thought to be hard, yea impossible. But indeed the hardnesse groweth more from our Ignorance of the Sinne, than from the difficulty

culty of it otherwise. For it should seeme that God writes no Sinne so evidently upon the foreheads of those that commit it as this. For,

1. It's committed in word as well as in thought.

2. It's committed publiquely, not privately.

3. It's desperately and directly committed, not by sleight onely, or under-hand.

4. It's an act of open spite and malice.

Thus farre it cannot but be evident. The greatest difficulty lies in this, to judge of these three things.

1. Whether it be done freely, not in speciall Temptation.

2. Whether it be done deliberately.

3. Whether against Knowledge and Conscience.

These Considerations must bee weighed.

For the first, whether freely and not upon some speciall Temptation; this Consideration is very needfull. Now I doe not meane by Tempta-

tion, a moving or stirring up to doe the Sinne, but a speciall co-working in the Sinne. For Satans worke in a Sinner commonly called Temptation,

is double { Motion by Commotion. { Perswasion, Terrifying.

Motion is then when by secret instinct, by reason, perswasion, alluring, inticing, terrifying, &c. hee moveth one to the Sinne; and this he doth in any Sinne.

Commotion is when over and besides his Motion hee helps to act the very Sinne. And this is double,

{either with, or besides } will.

This may better be understood by similitude: as when a man shall by perswasion onely stirre up one to doe a mischiefe, as to kill a man, leaving him alone to doe the act; or shall assist him also in the doing of it.

So that what a man doth in this kinde, either of Feare, or by Commotion besides will, cannot be this Sinne,

Sinne, which is the greatest of Sins, and therefore must needs have full consent of will. So that,

1. Manifest Feare, either of Life, or of that which is as deare as Life, as publique shame, and extreme misery, or bondage.

2. Some great hope of receiving some speciall good, that a man above all earthly things desireth; or of removing some grievous evill present upon him.

3. Speciall Temptation, as Frensie, or Satanicall Illusion by dreame in sleep, discharge of this guilt.

For the second Consideration; Notes of Deliberation are,

1. Constancy in the continuance of it.

2. Confidence in the maintenance and defence of it.

3. No appearance of any disturbance or passion, but a freedome of mind in the committing of it.

4. A shamelesse and bold behaviour after the committing of it.

5. A seeking and taking hold of all opportunities of committing it.

For the third against knowledge and Conscience, this is knowne;

1 When men goe against their owne grounds and principles (in their blasphemy) which they hold and maintaine with zeale and affection.

2. When they are faine to fly in the defence of their blasphemy to shamefull lies and slanders.

3. When being evidently so far convinced of the Sinne in generall, to wit, that it is a blasphemy and slander of the Spirit, yet they cease not still to maintaine it.

4. When the more they see it detected, the more still they commit it.

By this that hath been spoken may appeare, that very many, if not the most of the Iesuites and learned Papists in these dayes have and doe commit this Sinne; hithence all these points may be determined in them.

The

The sixth part.

Of the Condition of this Sin.

From the Conviction of this Sinne passe wee to the Condition of it. And here briefly to recapitulate the summe of all that is past. The more that our Saviour Christ by the workes of the Spirit did manifest himselfe to bee the Messias & Saviour of the world, the more did the Iewish Rulers and Governours, malice and despight him, and that Holy Spirit of God by which he wrought them.

And here, whereas our Saviour had miraculously healed a man possessed with a Devill that was both blind and dumbe, which so deepely affected the people, that they began thereupon to bee perswaded that hee was indeed that Messias which was to come: This effect

of Christs Miracles so inraged the Scribes and Pharisees, and made their malice and spite so to boil and seeth over, that, though in their consciences they were convicted even by the same works that hee was the Messias; yet the more they were convicted the more they were inraged, breathing out of their hellish throats direfull and damned blasphemies against Christ, and against that Spirit by which he wrought; affirming in the extreamest bitternesse, that Christ in casting out of Devils wrought by the Devill; and that the devill wherby he wrought, was *Beelzebub* himselfe the prince of Devils.

Our Saviour thereupon having first evidently proved that they were in their owne Consciences convicted, that that which they said was a most false slander, proceedeth after to shew further the fearfulnesse of this Sinne above all other kindes of Sinne whatsoever: that, whereas all other Sinnes may bee forgiven and pardoned, and are all forgiven and pardoned to some person or other; this

this kinde of Sinne alone shall never be forgiven to any, either in this life, or in the life to come, but that those who shall bee so graceless to breake out into the same, shall as certainly goe to Hell as there is an Hell.

So that our Saviour here makes a distinction of Sinnes, that some Sinnes are pardonable; that other some are unpardonable.

For the first he saith, that all Sins, one onely excepted, may be pardoned, yea though a man should revile and blaspheme even the Son of God himselfe.

For the second, hee affirmes that one Sinne onely is utterly impardonable, and that Sinne is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

In the former part, when our Saviour saith, that every Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; His meaning is not that they shall certainly and absolutely be forgiven to all men, so that no man for any Sin whatsoever shall goe to Hell, if he can keep himself from that one sin

that commeth after.

For then there should goe but a few, to speake of, to Hell: whereas it is cleere by Gods Word, that the number of those that shall be saved is but a small number in comparison of those that shall be damned.

Furthermore, the Scripture is as cleere that men are and shall be damned for other Sinnes besides this. *Luke 16.* The rich glutton in the *Gospell* was not damned for this Sinne, but for his unmercifulnesse to *Lazarus*, that miserable spectacle at his dore. *Mat. 25. 41,42,43.* And our *Saviours* Sentence of condemnation that hee shall pronounce at the latter day against those on his left hand, shewes the contrary.

Yea this Doctrine so taken, should be a Doctrine of the greatest liberty that ever was taught, and a very dissolving of the Law. For then might men murther, and whore, and steale, and lye, and sweare, and forsweare, and doe any thing without danger of Hell, so that they kept themselves from this Sinne.

But

But his meaning is, that this one Sinne excepted, there is no other particular Sinne, how high or hainous ſoever, but it is pardoned in ſome or other, may be pardoned in any, and ſhall bee pardonable in all, if the fault bee not in themſelves.

1 That they have been pardoned in ſome, the Scripture doth amply teſtifie. That Mother Sinne of all in eating the forbidden Fruit was forgiven in *Adam* and *Eve*, and in all the Elect, though eternally puniſhed in the Reprobate. So the Sin of Drunkenneſſe in *Noah*: the Sinne of lying and couſening in *Rebeckah* and *Iacob*; the Sinne of Inceſt in *Lot*; the Sinne of Murder and Adultery in *David*; the Sinne of Apoſtaſie and Idolatry in *Solomon*; the Sinne of Oppreſſion in *Zachee*; the Sinne of robbing and ſtealing in the Thiefe on the Croſſe; the Sin of bloudy and ſpightfull perſecuting of the Saints of God (which commeth neereſt the Sin impardonable) in the Apoſtle *Paul*.

2 That they may be forgiven, and are pardonable in any, appeares by this, that they have been pardoned in some. For if a Sinner can say that such or such a Sinne, which hee is guilty of, hath been pardoned in such or such a person; why should he despaire, as if God would not or could not pardon it in him? That which God hath done in any, hee can doe in thee.

3 That all other Sinnes are pardoned in all, except the fault bee in themselves, is evident also. For as God forceth none to sinne; so hee forceth none to continue in Sinne: And it is not for Sinne so much that he damneth any, as for the continuance therein without Repentance. And there are none that live in the Church, and have the use of their understanding, but hee vouchsafeth them sufficient means to bring them to Repentance, if they would use them, and seeke after them. Hee vouchsafeth indeed to some greater and more effectuall means than to other some, and doth worke more

power-

powerfully in the means. But there can none complaine and say, that they wanted means, and that the fault was not in themselves that they repented not.

Use.

1 This point serves to comfort those that are afflicted, and mourne, and groane under the burthen of their Sinnes, and through the sight of their Sinnes are brought as it were to the Gates of Hell, and to the pits brinke of despaire. How should the consideration of this support them against all such Temptations, that our Saviour himselfe should with his owne mouth professe that all Sinnes but one are forgiven to men? So that be their Sins never so many, never so great, yet if it be not that Sinne, there is hope of mercy, if due means be used, and they doe not desperately exclude themselves there-from.

2 This serves not to encourage and hearten any to goe on in their wonted course of sinning; but rather the contrary. It is the unspeakable goodnesse of *God* to be ready

to

to pardon all manner of Sins. But it's grosse folly and impiety in Sinners to thinke and conceit that hee will pardon any but such as use means for the getting of a pardon. The Prince is a gratious Prince in pardoning Traitors or Murtherers. But this consideration, that the King may doe it, or hath done it, is no motive to make those that are Traitors or Murtherers secure, much lesse to goe in their Treasons and Murthers: But they must be content to sue out, yea to pay deare oft for their pardons, or else their hope will lye in the dust. So is it with God. It's true, he is mercifull, and ready to pardon any Sinne; yet he hath and will condemne the greatest part of the World: and he will pardon none but such as use the means to sue out and purchase their pardon, by forsaking their Sinnes by true Repentance, and humbling themselves before the Throne of Gods mercy for them, with a full resolution never to returne againe to them.

3 The consideration of this may

may ſerve for a ſpeciall ſtay to them, who by the ſubtill Temptations of Satan are made to beleeve that they have committed the impardonable Sinne here ſpoken of. And commonly Satan, abuſing their Ignorance, puts theſe conceits into the minds of thoſe which are the farthеſt from that Sinne, to wit, humbled and afflicted Sinners. Whereas thoſe are leaſt troubled with the feare thereof, that either have committed it, or are neereſt to the committing of it. This therefore may help them ſomewhat, who know not ſo well what the Nature of that Sinne is, to conſider what particular Sinnes God is reported in the Word to have forgiven to his Servants, and to conſider whether their owne Sinne bee not one of the ſame kinde; which if it be, they may thence then infallibly conclude that it is not that impardonable Sinne.

All other Sinnes then are at the leaſt pardonable; yea they have been pardoned in ſome or other, and may be pardoned in any: But in whomſoever

soever this Sinne is found, which we principally intreat of, to wit, of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; he is certainly without all redemption a fire-brand of Hell. We cannot of any other Sinner pronounce an absolute and definitive Sentence of damnation; no, though he should breathe out his last gaspe in filthinesse and blasphemies: of this wee may. Hee that hath committed this Sin, is branded for Hell, and is more than bored or burnt in the Eare for Satan.

Quest. But why will not God pardon this Sinne?

Answ. We can give no reason why, but his Will. It shall not be pardoned, because he will not pardon it. Hee hath from Eternity decreed the contrary; and the maine ground of his Decree is his Free-will. So that a man can answer no otherwise to this question, than this, why the Lord should punish *Judas* his betraying, and not *Peters* forswearing.

Ob. But doth not this lessen the Lords Mercy?

Mercy? For what? may some say: Can man then in sinning goe beyond the Lord in mercy? Can a man by any Sin drowne the mercifulnesse of God towards him?

Though the greatnesse of Sinnes forgiven argue the greatnesse of Gods mercy; and though it argue greater mercy to forgive all Sinnes than some onely, and all men than some; yet you see this, that God hath decreed not to shew mercy upon all men. And as wee must not tye his Love and Mercy, which is most free, to the persons of all men; so wee must not tye it to all Sinnes any further than himselfe hath tied it. It should suffice us, that God is so infinite in mercy as to forgive some men; and to forgive in some men all Sinnes saving one. If he had saved but one Man, and pardoned but one Sinne in that one Man (if it were possible for any one Man to commit but one Sinne) his Mercy had been infinite. Hee might as freely have excepted any, yea many other Sinnes, as whoredome, pride, perjury, *Answ.*

perjury, Apostasie, &c. But this we must know, that God, as he is infinite in mercy, so he is infinite in his justice: And in his holy wisedome and providence he so mingleth and conjoyneth these twain, that the one limiteth the other. So that God is so farre forth mercifull as will stand with his infinite justice; and so farre forth just, as will stand with his infinite Mercy. His Mercy doth not drowne his Iustice, nor his Iustice his Mercy.

2 Goh sheweth Mercy to Sinners, that hee might glorifie himselfe in his mercy. But in shewing mercy to such a Sinne, hee might rather seeme both to staine his Mercy, and to disgrace his Iustice.

3 There is no Sinne whatsoever that makes God merciless, but in respect onely of the person. In this regard therefore is this Sin unpardonable, because the Lord hath decreed that none shall commit it but Reprobrates, in whom every Sin is unpardonable.

4 This

4 This very Sinne potentially is forgiven in all the Elect. For it is not of themselves that they doe not commit it, but of God, who bridles their wils: For even they also have the seeds of all Sinnes in themselves; as the Cubs of Woolves and Foxes, of all mischiefe and ravening, though they either cannot yet do, or dye ere they do hurt ought.

1 In comparing the Condition of this Sinne with the persons that here commit it; We may note that no outward state and condition of men whatsoever are freed by their places and callings from being Reprobrates and Castawaies. Who are in this World neerer in place to God then the Ministers and Teachers of the people, who are as it were Saviours unto others? yet these, and onely these in all the Word of God are mentioned to commit that unpardonable Sinne. Which should make us to take heed, how wee condemne the true Religion for the wickednesse of their persons that teach it. And againe not to content

Use.

content our selves with this, that we have a place in Gods Church. For we may have the highest rooms, and yet stand guilty of grievous Sinnes: yea, the higher roomes wee are in many times, the higher Sinnes are committed of us. Who in higher place then *Judas*? and who committed a greater Sinne?

2 Here is matter of Consolation for the Godly, who desire above all things to bee freed from Sinne, and to whom nothing is more combersome then the burthen of Sinne; that though they cannot be wholly rid of it while they live here; yet the Lord hath prescribed bounds unto their Sinnes; so that they cannot go so far in Sin against God as a Reprobate may. For no godly man can commit this Sinne.

3 For as much as it is bootlesse for them that have committed this Sinne to crave mercy of God, or to hope for grace with God; and that Satan therefore hath no more forcible Engine to worke despaire, than by

by perſwading humbled Souls, that they have fallen into it. It behooveth all ſuch, before they open the Gates of their Soule to deſpaire, to try whether they have committed it or no.

1 If thou doſt or haſt felt any marke of the Childe of God in thee, yea or no. For hee that hath any inward marke of Gods Childe, is ſtill Gods Childe, and cannot commit it.

2 Feare of committing it, is a ſigne of not committing it. For it's a deſperate Sinne. And ſuch perſons as commit it, uſe not to be ſo much troubled that they have committed it, as that they have not opportunity to commit it againe and againe. Experience it ſelfe teacheth this in your grand malitious perſecutors of Religion: they uſe not ſo much to be troubled for that evill and miſchiefe that they have done, as that they cannot doe more. And thus it was with theſe Scribes and Phariſees.

3 An unfained diſlike and hatred

cted of all the malitious enemies of Religion; and a speciall affection (*ceteris paribus*) to all the lovers of the Gospell.

4 An abhorring and loathing of our selves for it, and an acknowledgment of it, with a desire of pardon, when we suspect our selves to have committed it, are undoubted arguments of a soul that never committed this sinne.

4 The more fearefull and desperate the state and condition is; of those that commit this sin, the more it stands all men in hand to take heed of it, to keepe as far as may be from it, and to use all preservatives that may be against it. And to this end,

1 To know it, and conceive aright of it, that they may the more detest and abhorre it.

2 To take notice of those means by which men have fallen into it, that they may more carefully shun and avoid all such courses.

3 To take especiall heed of those sinnes that border neerest upon it, and

and have most affinity with it.

4 To be throughly perswaded of the curse of God due to sin; and of the blessings of God promised to all obedience.

5 To be fully assured, that even the least sin that is deserveth everlasting damnation.

6 To beware of all presumptuous sins, lest else by little and little they come to make the greatest sin no sin.

7 To set the mercy of God in the pardon of sin, at a high price.

8 To bee oft meditating of the joyes of heaven, and the torments of hell; the former whereof, this sinne once committed, doth irrecoverably deprive men of, and in bonds indissoluble oblige the committer of it to the later.

FINIS.